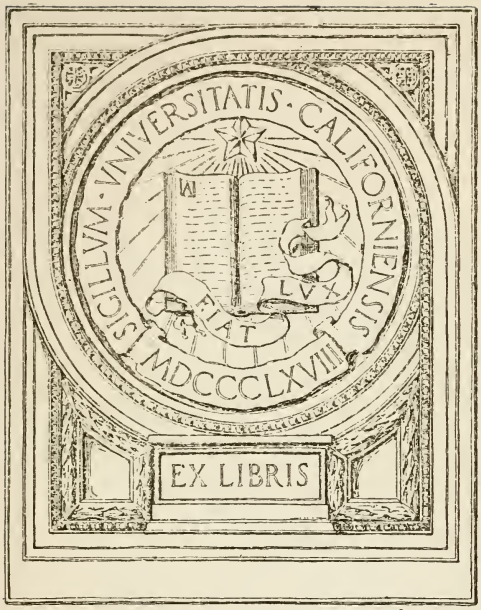
Brown Face and White

Clive Holland


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
FIAT LVX
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

955
H734
L

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/brownfacewhitest00hollrich

BROWN FACE AND WHITE

BROWN FACE AND WHITE

A STORY OF JAPAN

BY

CLIVE HOLLAND

AUTHOR OF "MY JAPANESE WIFE," "A JAPANESE ROMANCE," "AN EGYPTIAN COQUETTE," "MARCELLE OF THE LATIN QUARTER," ETC. ETC

LONDON
HURST & BLACKETT LTD.
PATERNOSTER HOUSE E.C.
1911

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE MYSTERY OF THE GARDEN . .	1
II.	A PROBLEM OF RACE	14
III.	THE PLOTTERS AT THE 'GOLDEN KITTEN'	28
IV.	WHAT ITO TOLD CHRISTOPHER EVELEGH	37
V.	THE GATHERING CLOUD . . .	52
VI.	THE COMING OF MYRA HELMONT .	73
VII.	THE LOVERS OF KUSATSU SAN . .	86
VIII.	THE STRANGER IN THE GARDEN . .	105
IX.	THE ARROW AND ITS MESSAGE . .	120
X.	THE SERVICE AT THE DENDŌ KWAN .	137
XI.	THE MEETING OF MYRA AND KUSATSU SAN	155
XII.	THE SILENT HOUSE	177

CHAPTER		PAGE
XIII.	THE PRICE OF PEACE	196
XIV.	THE CARRYING AWAY OF ROSAMUND	211
XV.	THE ATTACK ON THE DENDŌ KWAN .	231
XVI.	HOW KUSATSU SAN SENT THE NEWS TO NIKKO	255
XVII.	ONCOMING DEATH	269
XVIII.	THE ADVICE OF LIEUTENANT KIO-SAI	280
XIX.	THE HOME-GOING.	301

BROWN FACE AND WHITE

CHAPTER I

THE MYSTERY OF THE GARDEN

"EILEEN! Eileen!"

A man's voice, deep and sonorous, called in the exquisite twilight of a Japanese summer evening. And the faint echo which came back from the rocky hill-side bounding the Mission House garden on its eastern side answered, "Eileen! Eileen!" Over the hill-crest, on the steep sides of which, here and there, beeches, larches, pines, camphor trees, and maples grew, the last rays of the setting sun had streamed in a golden and crimson glory but a very short time before; for dusky twilight follows sunset very rapidly, and the stars in the Japanese sky creep out less stealthily than with us.

"Coming! Coming!" replied a voice at length from the far end of the beautiful and quaint garden, which in the daytime was a blaze of colour, and at night the home of so many weird shadows. And, almost ere the answering echo had died away, a slight, almost girlish figure in a smoke-grey *kimono* emerged from the environment of odorous flowers, and came with quick footsteps into the yellow path-

way of light which streamed out from a room opening on to the veranda through the open *shoji* (shutters).

"What is it, Chris?" inquired the woman, pausing with her foot upon the steps and glancing up at the man who had called her.

"I am rather troubled," replied the man, "and I want to talk to you."

The speaker, who was reclining in a long cane chair with his hands locked behind his head, was a tall, athletic-looking man about five-and-thirty years of age, with a somewhat clerical face. It was a 'good' rather than a handsome face. The brow was high and the chin firm, but the nose, though straight, and of a type one associates with the Georgian period of portraiture, was a trifle too massive for beauty, and moreover had a slightly upward tilt, which gave the owner's countenance in repose a rather humorous appearance.

The woman, who had been summoned by him from the mystic gloom of the garden, where she had been watching the lights appear one by one in the little town of Kin-shiu which lay in the fertile valley below the Mission House and straggled up the hill-side, was fully ten years his junior. She was tall, slender, though not thin, and of that fresh, wholesome type of beauty with which 'character' may be associated in a face without a risk of supervening plainness. Her skin had browned under the Eastern sun, but not so much that a hint of warmer colour could not be detected in her cheeks. Large grey eyes, which had sometimes a blue tinge and sometimes a brown in them as seen in different lights, gave distinction

to a face that had earned her the title of 'The Honourable Moon Lady' with her Japanese domestics and the townsfolk when first she came to Kin-shiu two years before.

"What troubles you, Chris?" asked Eileen Evelegh of her husband as she seated herself upon the arm of his chair and took his hand in hers. "It's not Tetsuya Mori again, is it?"

"No, no," replied Evelegh hastily. "Not Tetsuya, but all the same——"

He paused, and ere he could complete his remark the woman said softly, almost as though fearing to be overheard, or because she hesitated to put her thoughts into words. "Chris, dear, I'm afraid that I'm very uncharitable and you may be angry, but I don't like Tetsuya Mori. I don't believe he is true. And Chris—don't laugh at me or scold me—I'm afraid of him."

As his wife was speaking a shadow passed across Christopher Evelegh's face and he became graver. For a moment or two he said nothing. He had been known at Brasenose as 'Christopher the Charitable' because he always seemed to look for the admirable in the character of those with whom he was brought in contact. It was this characteristic more than any great love of the faith which the 'foreign devils' were seeking to introduce into the fertile and happy valley in which Kin-shiu lay many miles away from Nikko and the Imaichi Road with its giant cryptomerias, that had caused him to find favour in the eyes of the townsfolk and peasants alike. Just as his (to them) astonishing height of six feet and fine physique

had compelled their admiration. When he spoke again he merely said: "You afraid of Tetsuya! What is there to be afraid of? No, I was not even thinking of him, Eileen, but of Villiers."

"Hubert! What about him?"

"Well, you know that for some time past I have been troubled concerning his dealings with old Kambara Kano——"

"No, Chris, that's not it," interrupted his wife; "it's his dealings with little Kusatsu which are far more troubling and—dangerous."

Christopher Evelegh smiled.

"You are a true woman, Eileen, and have not much doubt about what will happen to a man when brought in close contact with a charming member of your sex. Perhaps you are right. But I was really thinking more of old Kambara, who is after all the pivot of the situation, than of Kusatsu for the moment. Kambara is one of the old style. He would sell his daughter to any rich man. And although he is fond of her in a queer way, he would not think a second time of the probable consequences of any act upon which he had to set his mind or decided——"

"I am afraid that Hubert *is* attracted to Kusatsu," interrupted Eileen Evelegh. "And the fact that he is of course fabulously rich on his three thousand *yen*[1] a year compared with any one in Kin-shiu, save perhaps old Ki-Node the tea-planter, is quite sufficient to recommend him in the eyes of Kambara." And then inconsequently the speaker continued, "I wish

[1] A *yen* — 2*s.* 1*d.* (about).

Myra had come out sooner. She won't arrive for a full three weeks, and the mischief may be done long before then."

"But Villiers might not admire Myra after all!" exclaimed Evelegh. "We men are queer creatures. Mixed marriages have always appeared to me a radical mistake often fraught with grave social as well as moral consequences; although, of course, there are exceptions. Peterson, for instance. But then he has expatriated himself, and if, instead of being practically relationless, he had ties in the old country, matters would have certainly become complicated. But after all, my dear," continued Evelegh, "I cannot stand in the way of Hubert's marrying Kusatsu if he is determined to do so."

"No, I suppose not," said Mrs. Evelegh after a pause. "But Kusatsu at present is a mere child. She thinks Hubert and you"—taking her husband's firm, strong, bronzed hand in her own olive-tinted one—"the most wonderful members of the human species. She would let Hubert trample her underfoot. The effect of the teaching of that old reprobate Kaibara Ekken, who in *Onna Diagaku* teaches women that they are completely subservient to man, which if you are only fair, Chris, you will admit is a most unjust and dangerous doctrine."

Christopher Evelegh laughed softly, and pinched his wife's ear.

"I know that the great Japanese moralist is no favourite of yours, my dear. But there is much to be said in favour of his teaching. That is until women are educated; until then, to place power in

their hands is as dangerous as to give a lighted torch to a child in a paper house. And even now, Eileen, when one is no longer confronted as in former days by the notices, 'The evil sect, called Christian, is strictly prohibited,' and 'Suspicious persons should be reported to the proper officers, and rewards for so doing will be paid,' education is uphill work."

"I know, Chris," said Eileen Evelegh softly; "but we are getting on. And you must not despair——"

"Yes, we are getting on," agreed Evelegh musingly. "But, Eileen, you tell me that Kusatsu only comes to learn English and read the Scriptures because she wishes to learn to talk in Villiers' language. And others because there is a growing feeling and knowledge that material prosperity, in even so comparatively a remote place as Kin-shiu, may be—some day, if not now—increased by a knowledge of the tongue of that great Western nation whose big ships go everywhere across the many seas. But we must watch not only ourselves and those with whom we come in contact, but also friend Hubert. Perhaps your panacea for his disease—Myra—will yet come in time."

Whilst Christopher Evelegh and his wife were talking on the veranda of their house on the hill-side above Kin-shiu, which lay north-west of Nikko, a figure, which had peered at Eileen from amidst the trees and rocks whilst she was at the bottom of their garden, had crept stealthily from dark blue-black shadow to shadow until, quite unobserved, it had finally, by snake-like crawling along the sanded path, reached the corner of the veranda immediately

below where Christopher Evelegh and his wife sat talking. There was something sinister about the figure's movements, something yet more sinister about the expression upon the small, yellow-skinned face, with its beady black eyes set close together, which now and then gleamed when, the owner venturing to raise his body cautiously until his head came just on the level with the floor of the veranda, a beam of light coming through the open *shoji* caught them.

Neither Christopher Evelegh nor his wife was aware of the two watchful, menacing eyes, for their backs happened to be partially turned towards them. But with the sensitiveness of some natures to outside impressions to that mysterious telepathic force which it is difficult to analyse, though of its existence there can be no doubt, Eileen Evelegh felt uncomfortable and ill at ease.

She was almost ashamed to confess her feelings to her husband. She had done so on several previous occasions. And then, manlike, on account of his great physical strength and courage, he had merely laughed at her. He was now so preoccupied with his thoughts and the conversation that he did not appear to notice her turn half-round several times to glance apprehensively along the veranda, the polished floor of which reflected the lamplight streaming out from the inner room.

Each time she glanced there was, however, nothing to be seen. For her movements whilst doing so were slow lest they should attract her husband's attention and cause him to indulge in gentle raillery at her

expense, and those of the crouching figure were wonderfully quick. At length her nerves became so overstrung that she was less careful than usual, and Evelegh glanced up.

"What is the matter, little woman?" he asked. "You seem strangely disturbed in your mind to-night. Come, tell me! What is it?"

Eileen murmured, "Oh, nothing much, Chris. I am tired, and I think Rosamund being so restless last night upset me. I am always fearing something is going to happen to the child. And we are so far from any medical man here in Kin-shiu. Oh! I know you can do a good deal," she hastily added, "but, after all, you are not like a real doctor, my dear. And there is no one else save old Ushijima, who, I believe, makes half his remedies out of pigeons' livers, frogs, beetles, and other horrible things."

"Well, we won't try him, anyway," laughed Evelegh. "But you are unusually nervous to-night; it is not like you. We had better go inside. I'll just have a look round before we do so, however. I rather expected Villiers up for a chat or a game of chess. You go indoors, and I'll join you in a minute or two."

The figure at the end of the veranda crouched low, and wriggled itself underneath it through the curtain-like trellis formed by the overhanging foliage of a vine. If he were discovered, well—and his hand travelled instinctively towards the handle of the long curved knife stuck in his belt. "If the foreign dog should discover him he would know what to do," he thought.

Evelegh, with a glance at his wife as she vanished through the opening in the *shoji*, descended the veranda steps slowly, and, turning to the left, advanced towards the corner where the spy was concealed. It was also the way to the path leading to the little bamboo wicket-gate, which opened on to the road running upwards along the hill-side and downwards to the town. When Evelegh reached the end of the veranda his keen eyes detected, even in the dusk, traces of disturbance of the foliage, and he was about to stoop and see what had caused it.

Then he said to himself, "It's only Kito's work, rummaging about after the *yama-nezumi* (rats), I expect," and he passed on.

Evelegh never knew or guessed, during the troublous times and dangers through which he afterwards passed, that he was nearer death that night than at almost any other period of his missionary career. The crouching man's knife had been stealthily drawn as he heard the approaching footsteps, and an upward, skilful sweep of its keen curved blade would have stretched Christopher Evelegh a dying, if not a dead, man on the path, and so almost without a groan.

A moment later and the wicket-gate clicked, and a tall figure loomed large and dim coming along the path between the stately tree peonies, magnolias, and the golden-hued valerian to which the Japanese have given the name of *O hina-meshi* (lady's smock).

"Is that you, Villiers?" called Evelegh.

"Hai!—Hai-i-i-i!" called the other musically. "What are you prowling about for?"

Ere Evelegh could answer Villiers had reached him, and was shaking him warmly by the hand.

"Oh, I was only having a look round," said Evelegh at length, after answering the usual polite inquiries regarding his wife's and Rosamund's health. "To tell you the truth, Villiers, ever since my wife encountered Tetsuya Mori in the winter, when she was coming back up the hill from visiting poor old Mitsumi Kato down in the Kago-machi, she has been nervous——"

"I don't wonder!" exclaimed Hubert Villiers. "You should have thrashed the brute within an inch of his life or wrung his skinny neck. You're not half militant enough, even for a parson, Evelegh," he added, laughing. "You know that it was Tetsuya who caused all the bother with Collins when he was at Kin-shiu before the edicts against you missionaries became more or less dead letters. Though they are legally in force to-day, as you know, and that's what tends to keep fanatics and evil-doers like Tetsuya on the war-path."

"Oh yes, I know all that. But surely you would not have me preach the Gospel of Peace and Good Will and use a sword?"

"No," laughed the other. "Your fists are big and good enough, or a walking-stick would do as well. But, joking aside, if something is not done to bottle up Tetsuya there will be trouble. And young Tsunetaro Kuroki is hand in glove with him. But perhaps I'm to blame for that," he continued soberly.

"Ah!" ejaculated his companion. "Eileen told

me some little time ago that young Tsunetaro was going to be affianced to Kusatsu Kano. I think Mishima told her. And now——" The speaker paused.

"And now her father Kambara does not seem to desire Tsunetaro so greatly as a son-in-law," laughed Villiers. "But what was that?" he exclaimed, suddenly breaking off.

"Where?" asked Evelegh.

"Over there! Can't you see, man?" replied Villiers, pointing across the garden in the direction of the path which led from the veranda steps almost in a straight line to the end, where it merged, as it were, in the thickly clad though rocky hillside.

"I see nothing!—I saw nothing!" exclaimed Evelegh, after he had gazed intently for a moment or two with his hand at the side of his face to keep off the light which came through the open *shoji* of the house.

"Nothing," said Villiers incredulously. "I could have sworn, man, that I saw some one come from the shadow of this end of the veranda, and, after cautiously peering above the edge, creep across that bar of light and scuttle stealthily away down the path. You see," he added, "this magnolia almost hid us. I caught sight of the fellow through the gap where that branch was broken off the other day. I am going to have a look, anyway."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Evelegh. "It was only some shadow."

But before he could lay a restraining hand upon

his companion's arm the latter had sped away down the path.

When he vanished in the gloom—for the garden extended a couple of hundred yards or so in that direction till it came to the edge of a little natural plateau overlooking the town—Evelegh suddenly remembered the disturbed vine trellis, and then Eileen's nervousness. Was there anything in it? And had Villiers really seen any one, he asked himself. If he had he was not going to allow his friend to tackle the intruder, whoever he might be, alone. So he himself hastened down the path in the direction Villiers had gone.

In a couple of minutes he had overtaken him. He found him standing near the rustic seat that they both had built for Eileen, who loved to sit at work with the beautiful panoramic view of the valley, town, hill-side, and distant villages and plum-hued range of mountains, with far-away Mount Asama, spread out before her.

Villiers was gazing not at the view, however, or rather the town, with its many lights twinkling like glow-worms down below him, but at the tree-clad, shadow-environed hill-side.

"Well!" exclaimed Evelegh. "And what of the chase?"

"Hush!" said Villiers, holding up his hand. Then, after a pause, he added. "Cannot you hear anything?"

"The grass crickets. Yes."

"No, no. A rustling, as though some one were up there in that clump of bushes."

Evelegh listened intently. And then he said, "No,

I hear nothing except, perhaps, some *tanezumi* (field mice) playing amongst last year's leaves, or a long-tailed lizard. Come along in. Eileen will have heard us, and will be wondering what we are up to."

"Stop a moment!" exclaimed Villiers in a whisper. Then he added seriously, "I'm positively certain that I saw some one, though I could not distinguish who it was, come out from the shadow at the end of the veranda and hurry stealthily away down this path. Also that some one is either hidden on or climbing up the hill-side at the present moment. I have half a mind to go up and see if I can discover him."

"You must do no such thing, Hubert," said his companion quietly but firmly. "If any one lurks in the bushes he is there for no good, and you, moreover, would be running grave and unnecessary risk."

Villiers hesitated a moment, and then Eileen's voice calling her husband in anxious tones came to them in the still night air, the silence of which was only broken by her "Chris, where are you? What are you doing?" and the chirp-chirp of the grass crickets and the melancholy croak of the frogs in a pool farther down the hill-side.

"All right, old fellow," said Villiers at length. "It would be rather an asinine proceeding perhaps. And one might get something stuck in one's ribs for one's pains without the chance of a fair fight. I'll come."

CHAPTER II

A PROBLEM OF RACE

EILEEN stood on the top of the steps with her figure silhouetted against the soft yellow light which came from the lamp in the room behind her. She watched the two men emerge from the gloom as they came up the path towards the house. But she did not hear her husband say to Villiers, "Not a word to Eileen. She is quite nervous enough as it is." Nor Villiers reply, "Of course, I won't say anything."

The Mission House, as it had come to be called, although the real one, a fairly substantial erection of stone in semi-foreign style with a slab roof, was down in Kin-shiu itself, was a typical Japanese dwelling of the better class, set amid a beautiful garden, part of which had been laid out a century or more before by the old owners of the small *yashika*[1] the Eveleghs' home had replaced. When they had succeeded the Rev. Timothy Collins as heads of the Kin-shiu and District Mission, they found no house in the town itself which suited them or their ideas of healthy environment. The half-

[1] Daimio's residence.

neglected garden on the hill-side, with its ancient and strangely dwarfed trees, and magnificent prospect over the outstretched valley had taken their fancy. The erection of a house was not a thing of many months, as with us at home, but a task of a few weeks, though built far more substantially than Western minds seem easily to conceive. It had grown, so to speak, in the direct inverse way to an English dwelling, from the roof downwards, but in the end had appeared charming and convenient, flooded with sunshine, earthquake-proof (because it had no foundation, but was built upon piles which in turn rested upon stones), and clean with a cleanliness which comes of polished beams, floors covered with spotless white matting, and was artistic and pleasing to the eye through absence of ostentation and meretricious ornament.

Into it, it is true, had been imported by the Eveleghs certain Western things: articles of European furniture, and more ornaments than would have been tolerated in the native house of even a wealthy merchant. But they were homelike embellishments, which had a pathetic significance, and conjured up memories of a far-off land, and somehow or other failed to spoil entirely or seem out of place in their simple environment.

Such was the writing-desk in the tiny room known as Evelegh's study (cut off from the parlour by paper *karakimi* or panelled screens sliding in grooves), where he interviewed converts, and those who came at first stealthily to enquire into the strange faith the 'foreign dog' was seeking to teach; the sick and

the very poor who would risk being seen coming out of the missionary's garden gate for the sake of the few *sen* he could give them to keep the wolf from their doors. And in the parlour there were two or three easy chairs, a substantial table—an article seldom or never found in a native house—a few photographs in frames fastened to the framework of the *karakimi*, and, most wonderful of all, an instrument of terrific aspect, "with a huge mouthful of black and white teeth which sang and groaned," as Mishima, the little nursemaid to the Eveleghs' child, had graphically described it to her parents—in a word, a piano.

It was this parlour, made sweet and bright with magnolias, lilies, and peonies in jars and vases, that Eileen, her husband, and Villiers entered after the two men had replied evasively to the woman's questionings.

"When I want to be comfortable and feel at home," Hubert Villiers had often said, "I come up to see you and sit in an easy chair, Mrs. Evelegh. I've been out here on the plantation three and a half years, but I've never got quite into the way of doing without a comfortable chair and of squatting cross-kneed upon the matting."

Eileen Evelegh generally laughed, remembering her own efforts at sitting Japanese way and how she had torn her petticoats in the process; and because it is always pleasant to a woman to have a man feel himself comfortable in the home of which she is mistress.

To-night Villiers chose his favourite chair—a shabby 'grandfather' which had seen service in

Evelegh's rooms at Brasenose—and sank with a sigh of relief into its yielding recesses.

A kerosene standard lamp, with a yellow silk shade, lighted the room with a soft radiance as near in quality as could be to the exquisite glow which filters through the fragile paper lanterns in native homes.

Evelegh pulled up another chair under the lamp for his wife, and then seated himself on the edge of a lounge which had been specially imported for her benefit from Vancouver via Nikko.

"I'm not going to sit down just yet," said Mrs. Evelegh; "Hubert will want something to eat, if its only biscuits, after the walk into Kin-shiu and climb up here; and as he's been good enough to come to cheer us up, I'll give him some coffee. I must see to it myself, for Mishima has still quaint ideas of making it. If she gets it the colour of dark sherry she is more than satisfied regarding its strength, and cannot understand how the honourable 'Strong Pine Tree' (glancing at her husband) and the Honourable Tea Planting Mister can drink 'much black coffee ink.'"

Eileen Evelegh clapped her hands loudly, for in the Japanese house there are no bells, and in a moment came the answering cry from the kitchen, "*Hai!—Hai-i-i-i, tadaima!*" from little Mishima, followed speedily by the sound of her stockinged feet shoo-shooing along the matting floor. Then the *karakimi*, which shut off the passage from the parlour, were slid aside in their grooves, and Mishima was seen kneeling just outside awaiting orders. She had been a little *musume* at a *chaya* (tea-house), and had there, as Evelegh used laughingly to say, learnt at least two

virtues and, so far as one could tell, no vices. The former were humility and promptness.

"*Kohi, tadaima, dozo!*" exclaimed her mistress. And the little figure bowed profoundly, closed the *karakimi*, made of an exquisite shade of grey paper which seems peculiar to Japan, and vanished.

But not before Evelegh from his position opposite the opening in the *karakimi* had noticed that Mishima's face, which usually had a delicate tinge of colour like the 'rosy' side of a peach, was white with the dead whiteness of a *bon Matsuri* lantern. The Japanese girl is trained from babyhood to control her emotions, but nevertheless it was quite clear to Evelegh's keen and observant eyes that the little maid was deeply perturbed and had even been weeping. Glancing at his wife to see if she had been equally observant, and gathering from the smile on her face that she had not, he turned her attention by chaffing her about her Japanese.

"You are progressing famously," he exclaimed, and Villiers, who had in five years obtained a good working knowledge of the language by constant study and converse with *geisha* (who could speak 'local English') whilst he was resident in Nikko, before he came to Kin-shiu, laughed. "You have the words all right, and the pronunciation is far from bad," he continued. "But"—raising his hands in mock horror—"the grammar and structure of your sentences are marvellously simple."

Mrs. Evelegh smiled, and crossed the room to where her husband sat. She found it difficult to think in Japanese, and even more so to leave to the

imagination, as did the natives, many of the most important words in a sentence.

"I know I am literal and too explicit, but Mishima, Kodaimo, and the rest seem to understand me, and that is the main thing. And some day I shall no doubt have mastered the language sufficiently to be as artistically suggestive and elusive in my conversation as the Japanese themselves, and, like the painter you are fond of talking about, shall be able to paint a picture of sheep and leave the animals out altogether.

Whilst she was speaking the *karakimi* were once more thrust aside, and Mishima, after bowing whilst she skilfully balanced the coffee-jar, pot, cups, and tiny kettle of hot water hissing over its charcoal stove on a tray, entered.

"*Arigato*, put it on the table," exclaimed her mistress without turning round.

As Mishima did so the light from the lamp fell full upon her face for a moment, and two tears which had trembled shining in the corners of her eyes slowly slid down her cheeks.

"There is something altogether wrong to-night," said Evelegh to himself. "I must try to see Mishima ere I turn in, and must put my revolver under my pillow."

Villiers' face was quite impassive. If he noticed anything he did not allow the fact to disclose itself. He had been considered by most of the foreign colony in Nikko, where he had resided for a couple of years ere coming up-country to Kin-shiu as manager of a famous tea plantation, as a 'strong' man. Evelegh, who had known him at Oxford, had oftened chaffed

him on his reputation, saying, "It's your impassive face and inscrutable smile, which would do credit to a Chinese, which has gained for you a reputation for strength of character which I, for one, don't believe you possess."

And there was something to be said for this view. Many a silent man gains a reputation for possessing brains whilst he only deserves one for having discretion.

Physically Villiers was not so big a man as his friend. He was, however, full nine inches above the height of the tallest Japanese on the plantation, and was of great physical strength, which earned him the admiration of the well-doing and the fear of the malingerers and evil-disposed. He was fair with blue-grey eyes, in direct contrast to Evelegh, whose hair was nearly black and his eyes dark brown. They had both of them done well at Oxford, in the schools and cricket field, and on the river. Their friendship consequently was of long standing, cemented by pleasant and loyal rivalry in the past, and similar tastes as regarded most material things in the present.

Hubert Villiers, who was Evelegh's junior, had come out as a 'griffin,' or new arrival, nearly three years before his friend had decided to accept responsibility for the Mission Station at Kin-shiu. The younger man had found nothing to his taste at home, and so a position in a good mercantile house of tea and silk exporters, with a considerable salary attached to it, had tempted him. His ability to say little when occasion required, to work hard, coupled with a facility for picking up a useful knowledge of a com-

plicated foreign language quickly, had soon recommended him to his employers, with a result that by the time the Eveleghs arrived Villiers was English manager of the firm's chief tea plantation which lay just outside Kin-shiu on the south-western slopes of the range of hills bounding the north-eastern side of the valley.

Of how great a value his friendship and experience had been to his friends on their first arrival only they could realise. It was so great, however, as to give him the freedom of their house as well as their complete confidence. Mrs. Evelegh he often said spoiled him, and on the evening when our story opens, as she brought him his coffee and some precious foreign biscuits, he told her so for the hundredth time or more.

"Drink it up, it is, as the Japanese say, good for honourable weariness, and don't flatter me," she said almost gaily, having during the coffee-making partially recovered from her nervous fears of earlier in the evening. "Now that Chris and you are served, I shall turn in. I am tired, and you will want a smoke and a chat. Of course you'll stay the night; I'll tell Mishima to get your bed ready." Adding, in excellent Japanese, with a mischievous smile, "*Ni mai desu ne, dana san?*"

"Bravo!" exclaimed Villiers. "*Saiyo, arigato.*" And then, lest she should not understand: "Yes, I do want two of those unsubstantial *futon*,[1] three if

[1] Thick quilts upon which a sheet (a new importation in Japan) is spread to form the bed, which in turn is covered by a *yagu* (or top *futon*, with sleeves like a *kimono*), under which the sleeper lies.

you like. I am getting old, and the floor is none too soft a bed without a good old-fashioned English mattress between one and it."

"You are too luxurious altogether for a bachelor," said Eileen Evelegh, as she paused ere passing through the *karakimi*. "I am sorry I have no spare mattress, but you shall have three of the thickest *futon* I can find. *Oyasumi nasai.* Good night."

When Eileen had disappeared the two men sat smoking their pipes for a minute or two without speaking.

It was Villiers who at length broke the silence.

"Evelegh," he said, "I came up to-night not so much to talk news and chat sociably, but to consult you on more personal matters. It's about little Kusatsu."

Christopher Evelegh said nothing, but he drew at his pipe somewhat more rapidly, as do some men when perturbed.

After a pause the other went on slowly: "I know what you think and say about 'mixed' marriages, but there are heaps of them in Yokohama, Tokio, Nagasaki, and, aye, in Nikko to a less degree; and they don't all of them turn out badly——"

"I know, I know," broke in Evelegh; "but those that do, and after all they are the great majority, Hubert, are terrible disasters. There was young Allenson, poor McBride, Haynes, and a host of others. What did their marriages with Japanese mean to them? Whilst out here social ostracism; for"—the speaker added sadly—"many who wink at irregular alliances won't tolerate the native woman

when she is a legal wife. And all of them, when their work was done and they wanted to go home, were brought face to face with problems which, God knows, were difficult of solution, and perhaps I ought to say could not be solved in the way to free the men this side of the graves of either the native women or themselves from the chains they had thoughtlessly or recklessly forged."

"I'm not a parson like you, Evelegh," interrupted Villiers, "and I can't look at things in exactly the same light. But surely you can understand something of the loneliness that seizes one every now and again out here with scarcely a European to speak to. It is all very well for you; perhaps even you are different stuff. But, anyway, you've got your wife and little Rosamund to cheer you up and keep you from the blues. Whilst I—what have I got? A desolate sort of house, presided over by old Tenshima and served by a 'boy.' Now Kusatsu has come into my life I can't root her out. I—I haven't the moral courage or, to be quite frank, even the inclination to turn my back on the companionship that she would afford, the interest and comfort she would bring into my existence. It may be the call of my lower nature. But there it is," he repeated almost fiercely.

"I've told you before what I think," said Evelegh quietly, after a pause of some moments. "I fear that whatever I may say will make no difference. I wish it might. And although, as you say, I am a parson, I think I can enter into your view of the case, and even sympathise more fully than you give

me credit for doing. As you know, Hubert, I am no priest who has trampled or attempted to trample the human out of his soul or life in cultivating the diviner attributes of character. The great Teacher of us all has surely shown that such a course leads only too often to the merest travesty of the life He would have us live. He reached those who followed Him through the most human side of their characters. So it is possible for me to admit much that you urge in favour of the course you wish to pursue. But all the same, though I do not wish to preach to you, I have sought to point out its perils. There need be none, perhaps, as you say ; but alas! there generally are. I did not study Japan and the Japanese characters and institutions and customs for three years before coming out here without profit, nor have I failed to confirm or modify what I learned since I have been on the spot. Think what it will mean when you go home, as some day you will. Either social ostracism by many of your old friends at home if you take Kusatsu with you ; or—well, the usual thing for her if left behind, and a moral crisis and perplexity for you at home in the old land."

"I have thought of all these things over and over again till I am almost bewildered. But there remains the fact, you see, that I love Kusatsu in a way that will be sufficient, and bring enough happiness to her who is unversed in social problems, and also am horribly lonely at times, which settles the matter for me."

"And Kambara?" questioned Evelegh.

"Oh, Kambara," replied Villiers, with the trace of a smile flickering round the corners of his clean-shaven lips; "I believe he is willing enough, nay, I fancy he is even anxious to give his daughter to me. He is a grasping old fellow, and has an idea that I am wonderfully rich and powerful." And as he said this Villiers laughed shortly.

"Well, if your mind is made up I have no more to say," exclaimed Evelegh somewhat reluctantly.

"The question is," resumed Villiers after a pause, "will you marry us?"

The question Villiers asked was not altogether unexpected by his friend, but the latter did not at once reply to it.

After all, he had been telling himself during the last few weeks, when Villiers' constant intercourse with little Kusatsu, daughter of old Kambara Kano the florist, had first engrossed his attention, what his friend had proposed to do was natural enough under the circumstances of his mode of life, and at all events Villiers was prepared to stand by his choice of a companion by marrying her. "Villiers is a good sort of fellow," Evelegh had told his wife, "but possessed of no great and outstanding moral qualities" which would have made him hesitate when once his mind was made up. Besides, of the winsome, natural charm of Kusatsu there could be no question.

Evelegh had heard much of the daintiness of Japanese women in youth, had read even more, and—on the whole he had to confess himself disappointed with them on personal acquaintance. He was too healthy, vigorous, and fastidious to be impressed by

the more or less artificial beauty of the *geishas* he had seen whilst at Nagasaki, Yokohama, and Tokio, which towns he had visited for a few months ere finally settling down to work at Kin-shiu.

Kusatsu was just that one radiant flower of beauty of which Japanese poets have sung, instinct with grace and that simple womanly charm which is rare enough in any land, least rare after all, perhaps, in Japan. Eileen Evelegh, the first time she saw Kusatsu amidst the flowers of her father's garden, which was known as the 'Bower of the Crimson Chrysanthemums,' had summed up the little figure in the words, "She is as lovely as her flowers, and altogether charming."

And this was the girl that Fate seemed to have thrown in Villiers' way. What wonder at the result?

At last Evelegh answered Villiers' question, "Will you marry us?"

"If this is the only solution of the matter," he replied frankly, "I will."

"There is only one other solution," said his companion. "And that would seem even less desirable, to you at all events, than marriage. Don't be vexed with me, old fellow," continued Villiers, seeing Evelegh was about to interrupt him, "I felt sure you would help me all you could. And although I'm not going to act upon your advice, I am sincerely grateful for it. Anyway, I can never charge you with neglect of duty in seeking to deter me if the experiment turns out badly."

A sudden thought appeared to strike Evelegh, for

he did not reply to Villiers' remark, but said : "There is one other side to this question, Hubert. You may find that you have made dangerous enemies in depriving young Tsunetaro Kuroki of his expected bride."

"I have thought of all that," exclaimed the other, "but I have no fear of Tsunetaro. He will soon console himself. There is some one else in Nikko, if report be true, who already exercises a fascination over him. I shall not require your services just yet ; but I thought I would like to know for certain that I could count upon you."

"You may always do that," replied Evelegh, getting up after knocking the ashes out of his pipe against the *tobako-ban* (smoking-box). "I think I'll turn in if you don't mind, as I have had a worrying sort of day with callers. One never knows whether 'enquirers' come as friends or foes. And whilst these edicts are legally in force, though happily not often put into operation, one has to choose one's words, and be guarded in even teaching the elements of one's faith."

"I shall not sit up," replied Villiers. "But," speaking in a low tone, "I shall sleep to-night with one eye open. I am glad that I brought my revolver with me. I generally carry it. Good night."

CHAPTER III

THE PLOTTERS AT THE 'GOLDEN KITTEN'

DOWN in Kin-shiu the lights were going out one by one, for the Japanese working classes are afoot early, and many of them in the country towns and villages retire to rest soon after sunset.

In the main street, known as Bungo machi, which straggled from the bottom of the hill on the side of which the Eveleghs' bungalow stood to the other side of the town, and only stopped at the bridge over the rushing Tera-gawa, there were still a few lights gleaming through the translucent *shoji* where the *amado*[1] had not been drawn and the houses shut up for the night. Along the street, a few pedestrians were still passing, hurrying home in the dusky gloom of the starlight night. At the corner of the street, where it was intersected by a much narrower, darker thoroughfare, known by the somewhat sinister name of Nezumi machi (Rat street), stood the *chaya*, or tea-house, of the 'Golden Kitten,' a resort of evil repute which Evelegh's predecessor, the Rev. Timothy Collins, had—considered from a merely tactical point of view—somewhat unwisely attacked early in his

[1] Outside shutters.

tenure of the Mission House, and had made several efforts in official quarters at Nikko to get closed. All he had succeeded in doing, however, was to earn the undying hatred of Yumoto Kameya, its proprietor, and its habitués for himself and his successor. Evelegh had been wiser, and had tried rather to detach its frequenters by personal influence than to attempt to suppress the evil by more active means. But he had not succeeded in allaying the animosity of Kameya and his chief patrons.

To-night the lights of the 'Golden Kitten' were even more brilliant than usual, and the sounds of boisterous revelry, which ascended from its chief room of public entertainment and several other private apartments, were such as to make most passers-by stop for a moment to listen, and tempted some to try to peer through the narrow slits where the *shoji* had been imperfectly closed, from which light streamed in pencil-like rays. Some stood still for a moment or so, and then passed on with a significant laugh. Others remained as though fascinated by what they saw. Sometimes a feminine figure would pass within, and be silhouetted vaguely for an instant, upon the paper screen-like *shoji* ere completely vanishing; occasionally there would come the sound of a girl's voice speaking softly.

About an hour after Villiers' and Evelegh's fruitless search for the suspected intruder in the garden, a man came slowly along the Bungo machi, and when he reached the main entrance to the 'Golden Kitten' he paused in the lamplight ere turning the corner into Nezumi machi. He was a small man, even for a

Japanese, clad in a smoke-blue *kimono* of some cotton stuff, opening at the throat over an under-garment of yellow silk, whilst on his feet he wore a pair of straw sandals. His face was small, very yellow, with two bead-like eyes placed too close together, which, however, were unusually bright and alert-looking. There was, too, something singularly unpleasant and even sinister about the man, who was of a low Japanese type. In his sash he wore a short, curved dagger, or long knife, in a handsomely engraved bronze sheath.

After pausing to make a remark to a couple of other men who stood listening to the laughter and music proceeding from the *chaya*, the little man passed down the dark, narrow Nezumi machi, and tapping on a door which gave on to the back, or rather side, of the 'Golden Kitten,' he was almost immediately admitted.

There was very little light or gaiety in the appearance of this part of the *chaya*, or the garden into which the doorway led. There were a few dwarf trees, and a pine trimmed into the semblance of a junk ; a stone lantern or two ; a cherry-tree, under which was a seat ; little more.

"So you have come, O Tetsuya San," said the figure who had admitted him, as the two crossed the narrow strip of garden which separated the entrance in Nezumi machi from the *chaya*. "What fortune, O clever one ?"

Tetsuya Mori—for it was he—did not answer for an instant, but peered across the little open space past the grotesquely clipped tree, which loomed large in the dim light, as though he feared some one was

concealed under cover of the thick shadows. Then he said shortly, and his voice was not pleasant to hear: "Yes, I have come, O Yumoto San. But of what I have to tell you we will not speak here. Some one might lurk, and for us secrecy is needful—for success."

His companion gave a grunt as though of assent, and the two men passed across the garden and entered the *chaya* by an opening in the *shoji* which Yumoto had left.

Music, noise, and the nearest approach to laughter of which the Japanese peasant is capable, or given to, struck upon their ears as they passed along a short passage, on both sides of which were rooms evidently occupied by revellers. At the far side of the house, which they at last reached, there was a pavilion-like excrescence, lighted by a solitary lantern of yellow paper, on the side of which was a drawing of a stork in full flight. It hung from the centre of one of the rafters.

There were two occupants of the room already, a man and a woman; the latter younger in years than one would guess at first sight. She was quite richly dressed—even gorgeously—and her face, which was lined by evil thoughts and evil passions, was painted and whitened. Both were smoking tiny native pipes, with bowls scarcely larger than acorn-cups, and looked up sharply as Yumoto and Tetsuya entered.

Their questioning glances evoked no reply, however, from the latter until he had seated himself on the white matting, lighted a pipe which he drew from

the sleeve of his *kimono*, and had taken several slow contemplative whiffs as though thinking carefully of what he should say.

At last, however, just as the woman was about to speak, he broke the silence.

"*Kon ban wa*, O Mitiki San, and you, O Sotari San. I am late, but the foreign dog on the hill-side yonder and his friend were wary as foxes; and I was able to do little. Not even to frighten the foreign woman with the face like the moon. As for Mishima, not a word did I get with her. Though she saw me just as it was dusk, and would, had I not threatened the other day to cut her throat whilst she slept and take her heart out of her body, have run to the Senkyōshi himself. It all happened," continued Tetsuya, "as you, O Sotaro San, in thy wisdom and foreseeing knowledge of future things told. The English overseer, Villiers San (only Tetsuya's pronunciation of the Englishman's name was so weirdly unlike the correct one as to defy even phonetic spelling), has set his eyes upon O Kusatsu San, who was to wed O Tsunetaro Kuroki. The moon-faced woman, wife of Senkyōshi Evelegh, has said so. And whilst they talked of it upon the veranda I was hidden close at hand. It is good," Tetsuya went on, "that I learned to talk as they do from Senkyōshi Collins. Tsunetaro is mad to see the blood of Villiers San flow, who has so turned the mind of O Kambara San that he no longer desires Tsunetaro for a son-in-law, although such was so long ago arranged. And you, O Mitiki San," he continued, addressing the woman who had sat listening intently

to the conversation, "you surely have no love for the moon-faced foreign woman and her husband."

Mitiki glanced at the speaker, and by the light of the lantern, which swung to and fro gently in a slight draught of air that came from a space where the *karakimi* failed to fit closely into the upper groove in the beam, her face had an expression of concentrated hatred causing the yellowish skin to become furrowed. In her eyes, which were coal-black and more than usually prominent, there gleamed a light almost like that of madness.

"You speak truly enough," she said at length. "I have no love for the Senkyōshi and his moon-faced wife, nor for their friend Villiers San. But you are foolish men if you think that you will hurt them and you yourselves remain unhurt. When Senkyōshi Collins came I learned to read the *Seisho* (Bible) because I was afraid that if I did not some other would be nurse in place of me. I learned to talk their language for the same reason. And I heard not once, but many times, Senkyōshi Collins say that if harm came to him, or if the Mission House and *hattō* (preaching-hall) were burned, as you so boldly talk, not only would another Mission House be built, but the red-haired men [1] would come across the sea, and those who harmed him or the Mission would be punished with a sharp sword, or would prefer the *hara-kiri*——"

"You are speaking foolishness," exclaimed Tetsuya angrily. "Even the Sonchō would be unwilling to lift a finger to save either the Senkyōshi, his moon-

[1] In the Japanese mind all who are fair-haired are red.

faced wife, and Villiers San if the priests are only with us."

"Listen, O Tetsuya San," said Mitiki. "You are a man, but sometimes wisdom dwells in a woman by virtue of her honourable ancestors. There is one way in which you can make the Senkyōshi writhe in agony, and the moon-faced wife of him be yet more moon-faced, and white as snow when it has freshly fallen out of the air. There is the little one. If she were to vanish one day, it would cause the Senkyōshi more sorrow than the foolish burning of the foreign *hattō*. What say you?"

"You are wiser than most women!" remarked Tetsuya reluctantly, "and you speak the truth in this. But I have read that these Senkyōshi are not frightened easily, nor will the loss of their dear ones cause them to return to their own land. And the Senkyōshi upon the hill-side is a big man, whose heart should be stronger than that of most. One needs a dark night, the sword, and a torch, and who is to tell but that the fire has fallen from the sky and consumed the Senkyōshi, his wife, and child as they slept. Surely you, O Yumoto San," continued the speaker, "have no love of the Senkyōshi, for has he not already taken away some of your customers, who now go to hear the *Seisho* read and to listen to the Jasō kyō (teaching of Jesus) instead of spending many *sen* with you, and helping you to pay for O Moto San, the dancer; O Uguisu San, the singer; and O Honoki San, she who plays upon the *samisen*!"

"Surely," agreed Yumoto, the cautious proprietor

of the 'Golden Kitten,' "I have no cause to love the Senkyōshi. But he is a great man ; and I have no wish that the Sonchō, O Katada San, should take yet more than he does of my most miserable profits, so that the Tan-dai may not come to hear of what I have been doing."

"You have a faint heart, though you are as rich as a gold mine, O Yumoto San," said Tetsuya angrily. "But perhaps you will learn wisdom before the time comes for us to act. And remember that the Senkyōshi and your trade are bitterly opposed, just as his Jasō kyō is at enmity with the teaching of the priests at the temple yonder. I can count those who are with me in my plan to rid us of the Senkyōshi by more than twenty now. The time will soon come for action."

As Tetsuya was speaking the *karakimi* was suddenly drawn aside, and a girl's face and then a but half-clothed figure was seen at the opening.

"Come quickly, master!" she said, panting for breath. The most honourable O Katada San, the Sonchō, is here, and with him a policeman.

Then the *karakimi* closed again, and the frightened, painted face of O Moto San vanished as suddenly as it had appeared.

The occupants of that back room in the 'Golden Kitten' were alarmed. O Katada San loved not the Senkyōshi, it was true ; but he might levy toll upon *them* did he but get an inkling of their plotting. He would not be above selling his friends that he might stand well with the Governor and the officials at Nikko. And there was always Yumoto to be bled,

whenever anything questionable took place at his *chaya* of which O Katada San got wind.

"Go quickly!" exclaimed Yumoto, as soon as the *karakimi* had closed. "Depart by the way that you came. I hear the voice of the Sonchō. If he sees you I shall have much trouble."

His companions were already on their feet anxiously listening. O Mitiki San, with her ear pressed against the paper of the *karakimi*, her finger raised, and a sibilant "Hush!" coming from her parted lips.

"It is he," she said at length. "If we are to escape we must go at once."

Yumoto slid back the *karakimi*, and peered out into the dimly lit passage way. At length he said, "You may go. All is right."

A moment later and the door leading from the back court and garden of the 'Golden Kitten' into Nezumi machi opened, and the three, who hated the Senkyōshi and Villiers for different reasons, passed out into the gloom.

On the hill-side the Mission House was peaceful and only dimly lit by the pale glow of the *andon* (night-lantern) in each occupied room. Outside the door of the Senkyōshi's room little Mishima, into whose tender and faithful heart the Jasō kyō had come to dwell, lay asleep on the spotless matting. Every now and again she stirred, and her dark eyes would open and seek to pierce the gloom, only to close again with the fatigue of a long day's work of loving service.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT ITO TOLD CHRISTOPHER EVELEGH

ONE day passed very much like another at the Mission House on the hill-side above Kin-shiu. There were the usual callers, some of whom Christopher Evelegh hoped were genuine 'inquirers' regarding the strange new faith, or Jasō kyō, which he was there to expound. Some of his visitors, however, Orientals though they were, could not keep from his keen eyes the underlying hostility and suspicion that glinted in their own, notwithstanding the suavity and punctilious respect with which they treated him.

Then there were the periodical services at the Kōgisho, and the class which met for the study of English several times a week. Although the native priests were bitterly opposed to Christianity, and were supported in their opposition by the Sonchō and such men as Yumoto Kameya and Katada, no great difficulty had been thrown in Evelegh's way regarding the teaching of English to the children of Kin-shiu whose parents cared for them to attend the class that Evelegh or his wife held. Even at this time, though the Commission which had been

appointed by the Japanese Government to inquire into the merits of the Christian faith on the spot had some time previously rendered its damaging report, which was affirmed and used as a weapon against missionaries and their work, the Japanese had discovered the usefulness of the English tongue from a purely commercial standpoint. But the pupils in Kin-shiu were comparatively small in numbers, owing to its remoteness from the seaboard and any great city.

There were, however, a score or so of children of both sexes, and a dozen older people who, having come under the personal magnetism of Evelegh and his wife, attended the classes with fair regularity. It was from these natives that the backbone of the small congregation which assembled on Sundays and other occasions was recruited from time to time. During Evelegh's predecessor's occupation of the station the growth of the church had been small. For one thing, it was practically the commencement of the work; for another, the Rev. Timothy Collins had lacked that indefinable element of personality the value of which, when dealing with a strange people, whether semi-civilised or entirely so, cannot easily be over-estimated.

Already Christopher Evelegh, possessing as he did this great and almost magnetic gift, was beloved by several of his flock, as he was undoubtedly respected by almost every individual member of it. And 'The Honourable Moon-Face Lady,' as Eileen Evelegh had been named, was not without a subtle gentle influence over those with whom she came in contact,

which was as potent a force for success in the work and for good as that of her husband himself. But amidst the thousands of people in Kin-shiu and the immediately adjacent villages, the few converts and the slightly more numerous attendants at school and at the Kōgisho were, as one of the oldest converts phrased it, "but as the pickers to the leaves in the tea fields."

On the morning following the evening when Tetsuya Mori had ventured into the Eveleghs' garden, the little pavilion, which had been erected at the back of the house, was got ready by Mishima quite early for the class. It was a delightful room into which the morning sun streamed in veritable golden banners of light through the widely opened *amado* and pushed-back, translucent *shoji*, giving an outlook upon a corner of the garden and a picturesque well, with its wooden *torii*-like well-head and long-handled dipping buckets beside it, that was scarcely less beautiful than the prospect which stretched down the hill-side in front of the Eveleghs' home itself.

As Hubert Villiers took his way down the winding road to Kin-shiu in the fresh air of that Japanese spring morning, he met some of the scholars, clad in bright cotton *kimono*, with soft-treading straw-sandals on their feet, and, in the case of some of the girls gay-hued paper umbrellas tilted over their shoulders, coming up the ochre-coloured road to school at the Senkyōshi's house. They greeted the 'Great English Sir' with the charming and graceful deference of the Japanese child. And as Villiers nodded to them and passed on down the hill-side, their youthful faces, some

of which were really pretty and others attractive with the indefinable charm of innocence and childhood, beamed smiles upon him. Amid a chorus of musical and softly murmured 'Ohayos' (Good mornings) Villiers vanished round a turn of the road as the first of the scholars reached the Mission House gate.

Along the winding garden path, amid a veritable sea of blossom, these human flowers of Japanese childhood approached the house singly and in twos and threes, pausing now and again for brief moments to tenderly touch or admire the wealth of blossom which bore evidence of the Senkyōshi's and O Ku Sama's (The Honourable Lady of the House) care. Then they one and all passed on round the corner of the house, near the spot where but the night before the long curved knife of Tetsuya Mori had nearly been buried in the body of unsuspecting Christopher Evelegh.

Slipping out of their sandals the children entered the schoolroom, whose spotless white matting was Mishima's pride. From a wall-cupboard little Otige San, the daughter of a bronze worker in the Ichi machi, a pretty child of ten, clad in a pale mauve cotton *kimono* on which a pattern of huge pale pink chrysanthemums was woven, took the books for the boys and the sewing for the girls with a dignity and air of reverence almost as though she performed some rite. In a few moments the sewing was distributed, and the books were in the hands of their chubby-fingered owners.

Then as the sound of the footsteps of some one approaching from the garden outside was heard, every

child in the spotless room, which was bare save for a solitary seat and a small table, solemnly turned towards the opening in the *shoji* through which Eileen would enter, and, resting on their hands and knees, bowed their heads till their foreheads touched the matting.

"Ohayo! Ohayo! Ohayo!" came the chorus of welcome as O Ku Sama entered with an answering smile and a no less softly pronounced greeting.

Then the little group of children, whose gay or delicately tinted and spotlessly clean *kimono* formed a pattern like a bed of human flowers, raised their bowed heads, and squatting, tailor-fashion, prepared themselves for the morning's work.

Eileen Evelegh was a good teacher, though she had little more than a working knowledge of colloquial Japanese, for she had mastered the intricacies of the then new-fashioned Kindergarten system ere leaving England, and, after their own complicated language, English did not seem to present by any means great difficulties to pupils who regarded her with reverential admiration. To some of the children, indeed, who had been tended by her in sickness, or whose childish troubles had been lightened by her sympathy, she appeared almost in the semblance of that Kwannon, the Goddess of Pity and Mercy, of whom their mothers sometimes spoke and to whom they prayed.

In the childish mind of little Otige San this idea was often present, and so she brought to the sweet-faced wife of the Senkyōshi, whose eyes were like deep pools amid the hills, and whose brow was untroubled because of the strong purity of the soul

which dwelt within her, flower offerings. And before the wonderful 'sun-picture' (photograph) Eileen had given her, she surreptitiously burnt any odd scraps of *senko* (incense-stick) which she could cozen out of the sellers of such things in Ichi machi, or from itinerant merchants of this sweet commodity, at Festival time.

Amid the droning hum of the childish voices struggling with the consonants of the English tongue, the soft pick-pick of many needles passing swiftly through the different fabrics, the buzz of insects and song of the cicadas outside in the sunlit garden, morning school went on. Surrounded by the children Eileen sat like a queen, garbed in a *kimono* of exquisite ice-white silk embroidered with elegant sprays of wistaria blossom.

"Ichi, one; Ni, two; San, three; Shi, four," droned the childish voices, with an undercurrent of murmuring like the sound of a distant placid sea lapping a sandy shore.

Then at the end of the lessons books were put away, needles carefully unthreaded or sheathed in the fabric through which they had been busily passing, and O Ku Sama, the wonderful teller of stories, talked to the children of the Jasō Who gathered little ones such as they at His knee.

And the lesson was the more easily taught and memory of it retained because of the Jizō legend of Japan herself. The Jizō to whom the souls of little children go, the lover and playfellow of the young.

"Ah, *Kyōin* San (teacher)," said Saru, the son of Hadote the wheelwright, "but your Jasō is dead,

as is the Jizō who watched over the ghosts of little children in Sai-no-Kawara."

The teacher's eyes dimmed, for to present the living Jasō to the Oriental child's mind she had as yet found well-nigh impossible. To accept the abstract idea, or the Jasō Who had passed into the regions to which their ancestors had departed—the Jasō who tended the departed souls or ghosts of children—was comparatively easy.

"Like the sunshine our Jasō is everywhere, Saru," replied Eileen Evelegh; "and, as you know, the sun shines unceasingly, though at night we cannot see it. So is Jasō everywhere, and when you do a good deed instead of a bad, when you are unselfish, when you are obedient to your father, it is the shining of Jasō in your heart."

"And your Jasō," Saru continued, as though only half-convinced, "would not allow the Oni to knock our towers down?"

"No, the good deeds of the children He loves can never be destroyed," replied Eileen Evelegh. "And there are no towers of sand or stones for the children of Jasō to build as a penance, for He forgives them their sins ere they die if they repent of them. Nor are there wicked demons to knock the towers down."

Saru's further questioning, to which the whole class had listened with the placid attention which so distinguishes the Japanese child, was cut short by the boom of a gong down in Kin-shiu, which marked the end of school. Through quaintly prostrated ranks of children the teacher passed out into the garden with a smiling 'Good-bye' upon her lips.

"Sayonaro! Sayonaro!! Sayonaro!!!" re-echoed the children.

Then they trooped out of the pavilion, and, smiling and chatting, made their way through the garden, and their voices faded away down along the road to their homes.

Whilst his wife had been engaged with the class, Evelegh himself had been less congenially employed in the pleasant room overlooking the front garden and hill-side from the veranda, running round which one could also catch glimpses of the distant mountains, around whose summit there generally hung in the spring-time a diaphanous mantle of fleecy clouds.

Indeed, almost as soon as Eileen had left him for her work in the schoolroom, Koba, the 'boy,' had announced that some one wished to speak with the Senkyōshi upon important matters.

It had been Evelegh's plan from the first to be accessible whenever possible to all who might seek an interview with him. The young university man who had been left in charge of the station on the death of Evelegh's forerunner had shaken his head when he found what was the new-comer's intention.

"It is splendid, but reckless," he had exclaimed. "The natives did not love Mr. Collins. He somehow or other, though a good man, failed to touch them, and in consequence you start, Mr. Evelegh, in a worse position than he did when he came to take up the work of the station."

Evelegh had listened to him, thanked him, smiled, and gone his own way about winning the trust and love of the few who had become attached to the

Church and Mission, and laid plans for breaking down the hostility of those who had been the enemies of Senkyōshi Collins. He remembered his old college tutor's parting advice : " Be confident, but be not too confident. The man who has no faith in himself or his Mission will neither win confidence nor achieve success." And on the desk in front of him, enshrined in a frame of filigree silver, each day he read the words, " A great door and effectual is opened . . . and there are many adversaries." In the saying of Professor Morrison, his old tutor, was much of Evelegh's character crystallised. In the text which stood upon his desk was expressed much of the faith and courage which inspired him.

The visitor Koba had, with a most humble prostration, shown into Evelegh's study that fine early summer morning was a typical lower-middle-class Japanese, whose ancestors might have been either farmers or fighting men attached to the establishment of some *samurai.* He wore a smoke-blue cotton *kimono*, embroidered with green pine sprays, and an out-of-date European bowler hat. Evelegh at once recognised the man as one carrying on the trade of florist in the Kago machi, who had more than once been present at the evening service in the Mission Hall in Kin-shiu.

He had been formerly several years, Evelegh was aware, in a big store in Yokohama, so he was not surprised when the man, after the most polite of prostrations, and when he had at Evelegh's request seated himself upon the floor, addressed him in the peculiar English of that cosmopolitan port.

As Evelegh glanced inquiringly and searchingly into the visitor's face, he soon satisfied himself that whatever the object of the man's visit might be, he was in some distress of mind—which showed dimly through his placid Oriental reserve—and was in deepest earnest.

"Senkyōshi San," he said, "this Jasō kyō muchee make man in Kin-shiu talk. Jasō kyō and Kameya San no chin-chin (agree). Jasō kyō good, make sick person well. But Jasō kyō make bad person afraid muchee. Jasō kyō make Kameya San muchee fear his 'girls' run away. His money no come muchee more. O Senkyōshi San," continued the speaker, with more earnestness of intonation than the native is usually given to, even in serious matters, "bad men fear and hate you great muchee. Bad men come one day, and then Senkyōshi San, O Ku Sama, and the little one will pass suddenly into the beyond."

With a horrible realism, but with a stoical face, the speaker made a sign which told of the terrible death he so evidently feared would overtake the Senkyōshi San, his wife, and their child.

In his college days Evelegh had earned a reputation for the best sort of courage—which, divorced from mere daring or bravado, is often one of the chief characteristics of a strong man—and a wholehearted devotion to duty and the work which he might have in hand. Nevertheless, as he listened to Ito the florist, he suddenly seemed to realise, as he had not done previously, and as young Goodrich had failed to make him, the fact that he was sur-

rounded not only by great difficulties, but by the "many adversaries" to whom St. Paul referred.

He would have been less or more than human if he had not for a brief moment quailed, though his face, which Ito watched keenly and anxiously, showed no trace of the impression that the latter's words and dramatic gestures had made upon his hearer.

"This may all be true, Ito San," he said at last. "And I believe you to speak no lie in what you say. And what you fear is not alone for me, and O Ku Sama, and the little child we hold dearer than life, but also lest the Jasō kyō should also suffer from our death."

Ito nodded his head solemnly, but said nothing. In the recesses of his mind thoughts were being born concerning the Senkyōshi who had so calmly listened to what he had had to say, and who evidently would not for one moment contemplate abandoning his Mission on account of the warning he had just received.

Ito, being a Japanese, was not unused to stoical acceptance of the seemingly inevitable, nor to personal courage of an heroic type. Indeed, the upbringing of the Japanese, the high patriotism and devotion to the Emperor and authority which is taught, made Evelegh's attitude less incomprehensible than it would surely otherwise have been. Ito was at a loss, however, when he came to consider the fact that Senkyōshi San was not brave because of his devotion to Ten-shi, 'the Son of Heaven,' the Emperor, family honour, or his an-

cestors, but because of his love for some one he, Ito, had heard of at the Dendō Kwan down in Kin-shiu. Some one Who had lived, many, many ages ago, a blameless and good life, and ultimately had passed from earth to a place the Senkyōshi called Heaven. And Ito, with his limited knowledge, had never heard of any one who had died for the gods, though he had known and heard of many who had done so for their rulers in past ages, and for the *daimio* to whom they were attached.

"Muchee bad men give the Senkyōshi San no muchee long time to get away," he remarked pleadingly. "A month, not muchee longer." Then he made an expressive gesture which plainly indicated 'Who knows?' and was again silent.

Evelegh himself, too, said nothing for several moments. He was thinking how difficult it was to make clear to the mind of his visitor the fact that whatever those who were opposed to the Jasō kyō might plan to do or even carry out, these things would neither frighten him nor cause him to abandon his work in Kin-shiu. Evelegh, however, would have been a less courageous man than he was had he not been disturbed by what his informant had told him. Of the underlying hostility of many in Kin-shiu, fostered by the Buddhist priests—who, split up into several sections hostile to one another, were yet united in their hatred of foreign missionaries and of the Jasō kyō which threatened to deprive them of profit and pilgrims—he was well aware. What he had learned from Ito was that the opposition was likely in the near future to be more active and more dangerous.

For himself he had little concern ; but for Eileen and Rosamund his fears were aroused.

At last he spoke in the quiet tones that his flock knew so well, which, even when his words were halting ones in a strange tongue, carried impressive weight if not always actual conviction to his hearers.

" Ito San," he said, " to you I am grateful for this visit and for the warning you have given. I will not forget. I will watch. I will be on my guard. I will not let my eyes close or my heart be too confident. But what you entreat me to do is impossible. The Jasō, of whom you have heard me tell, the King and Emperor of all, needs me to make His teaching plain. Would you turn your back upon Ten-shi, or refuse to yield up even life in his service ? "

Ito glanced with an expression of wonder and astonishment that Evelegh should have deemed such a question necessary.

" My life," he replied, with a simple directness which could leave no doubt in his hearer's mind that he was sincere, " is Ten-shi's, and that of my country. I may never be called upon to give it up, O Senkyōshi San ; but it will not be asked in vain."

In his intensity Ito had spoken in his native tongue with the circumlocution and the native way of leaving much to the imagination of the hearer, but Evelegh understood.

" It is well said, Ito San," he remarked. " And the Jasō I worship, and whose servant I am, did more for me and for you than even the greatest of the Ten-shis throughout the ages. He does not ask even me

to do what He has not already done Himself. He died that you and I might live after we have passed from this world into the 'Beyond.' He is more tender than even Kwannon (Goddess of Pity), to whom many of your women especially pray. More powerful than any earthly ruler—more wise than all the wisdom of the ancient writings. For a servant of His there is no possible desertion of his service, and"—Evelegh paused and looked fixedly at Ito—"no fear of death."

Ito San was moved.

Evelegh had talked to him in the only way that he could understand. There was some invisible Master—was not Ten-shi, the Son of Heaven, his Emperor, himself invisible to such as he—whom the Senkyōshi San served, and for whom he would even die. Had Evelegh talked of this Jasō without paralleling Ito's own devotion to Ten-shi and the patriotic idea, the man might have thought him but a foolhardy 'foreign devil,' for in the treaty port of Yokohama he had come in contact with many such, whose end was sure.

Ito somehow realised that to urge the Senkyōshi further would be useless. Upon his mind the calm directness of Evelegh's statement had made a deep impression. Even as he rose to go there came the sound of the school at the back of the house dispersing, and the footsteps of Eileen coming along the pathway of red-brown, beaten earth.

Ito merely said, "O Senkyōshi San, my eyes will not sleep, and if my tongue is silent because I have a wife and children, it will bring to you a warning in good time, never fear.

Then with a profound bow—Ito's forehead rested for a moment upon the pale white matting ere he rose—and saying simply, "Sayonaro, O Senkyōshi, I wish you well"—with an impassive face passed out into the sunlit garden of the *bokushi kwan*.[1]

[1] Missionary's house.

CHAPTER V

THE GATHERING CLOUD

"CHRIS! Chris!" Eileen called as she came round the house along the path, and at length reached the veranda steps which led up to her husband's study, from which Ito San had just descended.

In her hand she held an open letter which the coolie, who acted as messenger between Villiers and the Mission House, had given her as she came along the back of the house. Her face was bright with pleasure; but when she saw Ito's solemn face, from which even his Oriental stoicism could not banish every trace of distress of mind, she paused, and the news she was about to call out to Evelegh died upon her lips.

"Ohayo, O Ku Sama, I hope your honourable health is good," was all that the Japanese said as, with a ceremonious bow, he went on his way along the garden path to the gate beneath the miniature *torii* which opened on the road.

For a moment or two Eileen Evelegh paused, a charming figure in the ambient sunlight, which seemed to turn her *kimono* into a sheath of silver, and strayed

amid the tresses of her loosely arranged hair, turning it into threads of gold. She gazed so fixedly after the disappearing figure of Ito San that she did not at once realise the presence of her husband, who had come out upon the veranda at the sound of her call.

Eileen Evelegh possessed, in addition to a fine and courageous temperament, which fitted her so well for the duties which fall to the lot of the wives of ministers and of missionaries especially, the less common quality found in connection with courage and strength—namely, intuition and sensitive perception. Immediately she had caught sight of Ito San's face she knew that something was wrong—nay, seriously wrong. Thus it was she turned at length to her husband, when he had announced his presence by calling her by name, with a troubled face.

As she hastened up the veranda steps he placed his hand gently upon her shoulder and drew her into his study.

"What is it, dear?" he asked, glancing at the open letter crumpled in her hand.

"Oh, Chris!" she exclaimed, "I was so happy till—till I saw Ito San. And now I feel that you have been worried, and that there is something wrong."

"God's in His Heaven, and all's right with the world," answered Evelegh, with a smile. "Let us forget Ito San just now, and hear your news."

"Myra is at Yokohama. She landed at the beginning of the week!" exclaimed Eileen, recovering her spirits at the thought of her long-expected visitor's advent, and thrusting the letter into her husband's hands to read.

"That's good news!" he exclaimed. "Myra's coming will be a great delight to us both. And who knows but it might save Hubert from folly."

He read the letter through, which ran as follows:

"WINDSOR HOUSE, YOKOHAMA.
"*April 20th*, 18—.

"MY OWN DEAR EILEEN,

"At last I have arrived. How glad I am to think that in a short time I shall see you once more. And dear little Rosamund, and of course Chris.

"The steamer was delayed two days at Nagasaki. There had been something wrong with boiler-tubes soon after leaving Hong-Kong. Even now, as I sit on the veranda and look out over the bay to the ships, and Chiba across it, and all the signs of strange native life, I begin to realise that I am really in Japan at last, and, still more wonderful, am within less than two hundred miles of my darling sister.

"The Thurstons, with whom I came out, and who are still staying here till they can get a bungalow up on the Bluff, will see me on my way, possibly as far as Nikko. They send their kind remembrances to you.

"Yokohama is indeed a wonderful place. You must not grudge me one or two more days here, for remember it is my first real glimpse of the East. I have had my first *jinrikisha* ride out to the Japanese town, through wonderful bumpy streets, and past equally wonderful shops and houses, which seem to me to emerge—amid a jumble of impressions—like scenes from the *Arabian Nights*. Above the bobbing, mushroom-shaped hat of my *kurumaya* boy I got glimpses of tiny, toddling mites with happy faces, and quaint shaven heads, and in gay-coloured *kimono*; queer shop fronts, in the recesses of which sat the figures of their proprietors, sometimes as though

made of bronze; and curious pedlars and street merchants. One old man—Constance Thurston told me—was a fortune-teller, in whose lacquer box are strips of bamboo called *mikuji*, in exchange for which one receives pieces of paper with corresponding numbers on which the 'fortunes' are written, interested me so much that I had half a mind to give him the two *sen* he asked, and see what Japan has in store for me!

"To me, perched up in my *jinrikisha* above the level of the crowds of small-statured humanity which surged in the narrow streets of the native town, everything seemed strange, mysterious, and unreal. There appeared to be a note of blue in everything—from the sky above and very atmosphere itself, to the roofs of the tiny houses, the shop fronts, and the garb of the people. It was all so bewilderingly novel, so delightfully picturesque, that the grotesque attempts at advertisement in my native tongue came almost as a shock to me. The humour of such announcements as 'Pigmeat and Cowmeat Good Man Seller,' 'Cut Hairer, Barber Shave Man,' and similar signs seemed almost out of place, although I confess to laughing.

"In one street there were flags innumerable and coloured paper lanterns galore. The former sometimes, when stirred by the gentle air, almost swept my hat off my head. I realised at last that it was chiefly the wonderful array of Japanese and Chinese writing which decorated flags, shop fronts, door-posts, and I know not what, that contributed so largely to the picturesqueness of what would otherwise after all have been somewhat squalid streets.

"But I must not write more. You know all this. Forgive the enthusiasm of a *griffin*,[1] or should I say *griffin-ess?* See how soon I have picked up the slang of Yokohama!

[1] A new arrival in the East.

"Once more let me tell you how I am longing to see your dear face. My love to you both and to Rosamund.

"By the way, who is Hubert Villiers? Is he the Villiers with whom Chris was at College? I hope he is nice. If he is not, I shall grudge the constant visits which you tell me he pays you.

"Your affectionate

"MYRA.

"P.S.—I forgot to say that I shall leave for Nikko ere this reaches you. You may expect me almost any time."

Whilst he was reading the letter Evelegh smiled. It was full of the natural enthusiasm that Myra possessed in a marked degree, and also showed the faculty of observation and selection which had in the old days made her, whilst scarcely out of the schoolroom, so keen and destructive a critic of his early sermons.

He turned to Eileen with evident pleasure illumining his face.

"This is indeed good news," he said, stooping towards her and kissing her forehead, which the Japanese sun had made like a piece of smooth, golden-tinted ivory. "If we only knew when she would arrive, we might both have gone along the road to Nikko to meet her."

But as he spoke the remembrance of his talk with Ito San and the latter's warning caused a transient shadow to pass across his face which Eileen was quick to notice.

"How selfish I have been in my joy at Myra's coming!" she exclaimed penitently. "Chris, dear, I

am sure there is something troubling you—something connected with Ito San's visit. Come, tell me what it is!" And then she added almost playfully: "You cannot deceive me. You know you have often said that I possess an uncanny knowledge of what troubles you or is passing through your mind."

"There are some secrets," Evelegh replied, "little woman, that are not the property of a man in my position alone, and these I must bear without your loving co-knowledge. But this is not one of them. Can you be brave and strong if I tell you?" And as he spoke he took her face between his hands, and gazed questioningly into her clear, dark grey eyes.

What he found in their depths must have been satisfying, for he released her face, and rising—as he generally did when perturbed or about to discuss a serious matter—he stood by the corner of the desk with his hand fingering a bronze paper-knife meditatively.

At last he spoke, briefly telling her all that Ito San had said.

She sat listening, with her breath coming a little more quickly than usual, her face resting on her hands and her elbows upon her knees. The courage of a soldier ancestry, and that of a good and pure woman, caused her to be entirely forgetful of self. But the woman in her relentlessly tore at her heart-strings when a vision of curly-headed, toddling Rosamund, the delight and sunshine of their lives, suddenly presented itself. But she said nothing. She possessed the great virtue of hearing in silence matters which affected her most deeply.

Within the ken of her woman's vision, subtler of quality, more dramatic, and more sensitive than that of Evelegh, floated as it were the terrors of all that Ito San had referred to so indefinitely, and her husband was now seeking to describe as undisturbingly as possible. A deeper tinge of colour flushed her cheek at the mere thought that she, a missionary's wife and a soldier's daughter, could for an instant quail, which deepened still more as she remembered the text of one of Evelegh's recent sermonettes down at the Dendō Kwan, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me . . . and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

When he had finished speaking Evelegh paused and gazed tenderly at his wife, who sat very still, with her head drooping between her hands. For several moments neither spoke, and then Eileen said: "I am glad you have told me, Chris. Do you think what Ito San says is really true?"

"I cannot tell, dear," was the reply, "but I have noticed lately certain signs which make me think that perhaps he is right; that his feeling of gratitude to us for all you did when his wife was sick has not made him exaggerate our danger. I fear he may be correct in thinking that the present passive hostility may become active in the near future. There is one thing we must do——"

"Oh, Chris, you do not mean to send me away? I am not afraid"; and as the words fell from her lips Eileen rose and came close to him. "I'm not afraid,"

she repeated with her voice steadied, "except—except," and again the woman in her—which was also the mother instinct—tore at her heart, " for Rosamund."

" I know ! I know ! I knew you would not quail, my Eileen," said Evelegh gently. " But perhaps it would be best for you to go down to Nikko with her for a time. Only for a time."

" And leave you ? " cried Eileen. " No, a thousand times, no." And then more softly, " I have not forgotten the sermon which brought Arato to embrace the faith."

" Then," said Evelegh, with a glow of thankfulness and pride suffusing him, " we will remain all together in the protection of Him in whom we believe, and in whom we have eternal hope."

" There is Myra," exclaimed Eileen suddenly. " Ought she to come to us ? "

" I had been thinking of that," replied Evelegh. " If we could stop her, at least for a time, we ought. But I am afraid that long ere our message could reach her she will have left for Nikko, and perhaps even have started for Kin-shiu. We might send a telegram and see. Ato can take it down at once."

Evelegh seated himself at his desk and wrote out the message on a piece of shrimp-coloured rice-paper, placed it in an envelope, and addressed it to the clerk in charge of the telegraph instrument in Fuki machi.

Then he said quietly to his wife : " I cannot urge you to go to Nikko and leave the work. We both love it too well to abandon it, even if to do so were not cowardice. I fancy, too, that if Myra comes

she will not consent to leave us; though to return to a place which would be perhaps safer than Kin-shiu for the present would be wise. But we shall see."

Eileen's reply was checked. From without came first the sound of a sweet baby voice calling in questioning tones, "Mummie, mummie!" Then, after a pause, "Mummie! Daddie! Where are lou? where are lou?"

Then came the sounds of somewhat unsteady footsteps climbing the veranda stairs, a toddling rush along the polished floor, and silhouetted in the doorway stood the Rosamund whose peril had caused Eileen to quail.

"There lou bose are!" cried Rosamund, with a radiance glowing in her chubby face which almost rivalled the exquisite clarity of the sunshine outside.

"Lift me up twite high, pease Daddie," she exclaimed, and then, with the wayward fickleness of the small child, she swung round in her father's arms and, stretching her own out to Eileen, cried out, "Want's to go to Mums!"

If ever any doubt as to the course he should adopt crossed Evelegh's mind, it was now when he felt the soft warm pressure of those baby arms encircling his neck. But the Faith which had called him from his Western home to his Eastern, and had supported him in the crisis when for a time all seemed black and his work doomed to failure after he had been at Kin-shiu but a few months, smoothed the trouble from his brow and exorcised the demon of doubt from his heart.

Baby Rosamund had come to relieve the tension of the vital discussion which had occupied her father's and mother's minds, and as she swung between the two who loved her so well, finally to fall safely into the outstretched arms of Eileen, the latter said, "Guess, Rosie, who is coming?"

"Auntie," said the child, after a momentary pause —"Auntie Myra. When?"

Laughing at her baby's cleverness, Eileen said, "Very soon. Perhaps to-morrow."

"That's all light," murmured Rosamund, and then, "Oh, pease put me down, pease do, mums. There's a butterfly."

When his child and Eileen had vanished in chase of it through the open *shoji* and along the veranda, Evelegh sat down to think.

He scarcely knew whether to hope that his telegram would fail to reach his sister-in-law or not. She would be so great a comfort to his wife, and after all perhaps Ito San was misinformed. And yet certain small incidents which had lately occurred, and at the time scarcely engaged his attention, seemed now to assume a startling and important significance. Then there was the occurrence of the night before, although, of course, he was in ignorance of how sinister the thing had really been.

The sunlight was, however, a good tonic, and it seemed impossible to be possessed of gloomy forebodings when he glanced out into the exquisite sunlit garden in which he and Eileen took so great a pride, and their comprehension of which had proved a bond of sympathy with not a few of their

Japanese acquaintances. A common love of the beautiful and of nature will often serve to bring together those who are far sundered by race, language, and interests.

The clock upon the shelf in the little alcove in which the *butsudan*, or household shrine, of a previous owner had formerly stood, struck eleven. Its striking reminded Evelegh that he had to meet the caretaker of the Dendō kwan at noon ; so taking up his hat and a stout walking-cane, which he almost invariably carried for use if necessary as a weapon of defence against the snapping, yellow-haired, homeless dogs infesting the alleys and by-ways of the town, he left the house, and, proceeding down the garden and out of the gate, walked away along the steeply sloping road to the town below the hillside.

The Dendō Kwan, or Mission Hall, at Kin-shiu, which almost deserved the description of church, lay on the side of the town nearest the road leading down from the Mission House itself. It was a substantial building of grey stone, oblong in ground plan, neat and somewhat plain in the style of its architecture, with a small outside entrance porch, massive doors, with two lancet windows, one on either side of the latter, and with three somewhat larger windows in each of the side walls. The windows in every case had been placed some seven feet from the ground. The building had a clear way all round it of about forty feet, and in front of it and at the back were wider open spaces. But in the rear of the building itself a wooden schoolroom had been erected,

separated from the main building by a small courtyard.

A former Mission Hall of wood had been burned to the ground by incendiaries ten years before Evelegh came to Kin-shiu.

As Evelegh took his way down the hill-side road he encountered several acquaintances, who saluted him with the elaborate politeness and ceremony of the race, calling out in Japanese "Good morning! I hope your honourable health is good," as they passed him. They were mostly men from whom he had his supplies of food and similar stores, or to whom he had shown some kindness. One, however, was a young man whose father was one of the largest tea growers in the district. He had been to Europe to be educated, and had returned after two years imbued with more liberal and more tolerant ideas than those possessed by most of his fellow townsfolk. As a consequence he had, from the date of Evelegh's arrival, sought him out for conversation and friendship, though seldom, if ever, attending the Mission services or discussing the subject of Christianity.

Young Tanaka Maru greeted Evelegh with a smile (a European smile Eileen used to call it), and, after inquiries after his honourable health, suddenly said to him: "Pardon, Evelegh San, but the priests of the temple which stands in Yake machi are stirring up the people against you and your Jasō kyō. They are fools," he added contemptuously, "for I have ever heard you speak favourably of the great duties of obedience to one's parents and the authorities, which even the priests themselves inculcate. And never

have you said a word against the gods or against our departed ancestors. You have been good to me, Evelegh San," he went on, "and I am grateful. You have freed me from the chains which drew me to the *chaya* of Kameya, where I wasted money, time, and would, but for you, have indulged in pleasures which would have clouded the brain and fouled the body the gods have given me. I do not forget, I shall not forget.

"Take warning, for the priests of the great temple and of the one in the Kasuga machi also are awake and stirring. They have slept because they thought, like your predecessor, Senkyōshi Collins, you would do little, and that the people would turn a deaf ear to your Jasō kyō. Now that they find the people come to listen to you, and some of them are learning to read your Seisho (Holy book), they are bestirring themselves. And Kameya, also, is not sleeping. There are many who now no longer go to his *chaya*, or, if going, do so merely for refreshments, and not to enjoy the pleasures offered by the *geisha* he employs. He has lost Yoshimitsu, who once used to spend many *yen* a night, and pay a big price for his pleasures. Kameya, too, is not sleeping, but awake with eyes wide open, and his mind bent on doing you mischief."

Evelegh listened to the young man's evidently earnest words with a grave face. The one overshadowing thought to which they gave rise was that in Ito San's and Tanaka Maru's words he must perforce read a message of serious warning. Not that the least fear for himself had crept even stealthily into his

heart, but for Eileen and Rosamund, and for Myra, who appeared to be coming unwittingly into a zone of ever-threatening danger.

At last he spoke.

"I thank you sincerely, O Tanaka Maru San," he said. "Your words shall dwell in my mind. I am glad to be your friend, more than glad that you should be mine. Should you hear anything further, let me know."

Tanaka Maru regarded the speaker curiously, and very little of the admiration he felt for so obviously brave a man appeared in his face. Perhaps, however, Tanaka Maru was nearer a knowledge of the root principles of the Jasō kyō, with which his friend Evelegh was so deeply concerned and he so little, than at any former period of their intercourse.

"It is nothing," he replied, "that I have done. Only sleep not, O Evelegh San," and with a "Sayonaro" and a hand-shake, English fashion, he turned away, and proceeded up the hill-road by which Evelegh had descended.

Evelegh soon reached the Mission Hall. The street in which it stood was a wider one than most in Kin-shiu from the fact that it was on the outskirts of the town, and was actually a part of the main road to Yakote northward, and ultimately joined the Nikko high road a few miles south-west of the town. Although Evelegh had now been some years in Japan, the picturesqueness of the Japanese streets, landscape, and people had by no means commenced to pall. The wide road, stretching for a considerable distance in a straight line, bordered on either side by quaint one

or two storied houses, with shingle or reddish brown tiled roofs beautifully 'weathered'; the fluttering banners outside some of the shops, on which, in huge Japanese characters, advertisements of the wares to be found within were set forth; the picturesque groups of people and children gathered in knots outside the shop fronts or standing chatting, the pedestrians and street hawkers, all caused him to pause and gaze a moment or two on the familiar sight ere entering the railed-in fore-court which led to the Mission Hall and separated the building from the road. Over all the scene hung a delicately blue-grey sky, flecked with tiny clouds, unsubstantial as the morning mist which the rising sun had but a few hours before driven off the lower-lying land of the valley to the north-west of the town, and on the yellow roadway of the street lay a tangled lattice work of sunshine patches and shadows which added to the pictorial effect an element of brightness and charm.

"Senkyōshi San! Senkyōshi San!" called out a small group of children who were standing outside the shop of Amato Yusui, the seller of live stock, which included sweet-voiced *uguisu* and *mamejiro* (Siberian thrushes), and even brilliant green grasshoppers in tiny cages of split bamboo.

Evelegh smiled and called out, "*Kon nichi wa Oide nasai.*" And the youngsters accepted his invitation, and came running to him.

To many of the children of Kin-shiu Evelegh (at first a terrible barbarian) had long ago become a friend. Villiers often wondered at the strange gentle-

ness of his six-foot tall, athletic, courageous friend, whose character was so firm, and whose whole bearing seemed more in keeping with the life of a soldier than of a cleric. But numberless small acts of kindness, and a singularly winning manner, more especially where children were concerned, had soon broken down the barrier of reserve which at first existed between him and the little ones of Kin-shiu. Now they came and crowded round him, telling him a whole host of unimportant things, which seemed to them to form the centres of their existence, asking him questions about the Seisho people (characters in the Bible) which had interested or quickened their imaginations, till he was obliged, as he heard the gong of the Shinto monastery away among the hills boom deeply, to tear himself away and seek refuge in the Mission Hall.

The children saw him vanish through the door of the Dendō kwan with regret. Sometimes, indeed, he would sit under the shade of the Japanese pine-tree at the rear of the building, which had once formed the chief ornament of an old garden, and tell them stories of the far-off land from which he had come, or of the wonderful Jasō who, once a child like themselves, had grown up and walked about the world doing good, and had ultimately vanished into the blue heavens above them, and passed into "that strange beyond place which Senkyōshi called Heaven."

When Evelegh entered the little Church he soon saw old Mi-Kawa, whose devotion to the Jasō kyō, which he had embraced years before at Nagasaki, where nearly twenty years previously the first foreign

missionary in modern times had landed in Japan, had withstood all temptations and in the early days even persecution, kneeling in prayer at the far end of the Hall. As he approached him, Evelegh became suddenly aware that Mi-Kawa was surrounded with a litter of fragments of torn paper which he had evidently been endeavouring to piece together and sort out into piles.

Hearing footsteps the old man looked up, and then Evelegh saw that his eyes were red-rimmed with weeping, and that tears were yet coursing their way down his cheeks.

"*Doshtu* (What is the matter), O Mi-Kawa San?" exclaimed Evelegh anxiously.

Struggling to his feet the old man cried out, in a voice which was unsteady from emotion: "Woe is me, O Evelegh San!—woe is me! For whilst I slept the enemies of Jasō and of thee came in the silence of the night, and have taken and destroyed the Bibles and the other books from which we sing. Woe is me, for Jasō Himself will be sad. I heard nothing, but when I entered the place an hour or so ago I found not a Seisho whole. And on the wall and on the place from which you teach many horrible writings. These I have effaced that your eyes might not behold their iniquity; but the books of Jasō, they are beyond the skill that thy servant possesses to repair."

In the strong light of the Mission Hall, the matting floor of which was almost as spotless as that of the Mission House itself, the walls bare, save that here and there on the distemper texts had been inscribed

in long columns of Japanese or Chinese characters, Evelegh's face showed the pallor of a strong man's deep emotion. It was impossible for him not to be stirred by the seriousness of this act of deliberate sacrilege that had come upon him like a thunder-clap from out a threatening sky, but the significance of which he could well understand.

Mi-Kawa regarded his beloved teacher with a face upon which grief was written more deeply than one often sees upon that of a Japanese. Here, he thought, was the Senkyōshi, whose strength and power he well knew, grieved to the heart and speechless at the terrible thing which had happened.

At last Evelegh spoke.

"What has been done by wicked men," he said, "is sorrow-bringing indeed, O Mi-Kawa San. But on you there is no blame resting. You have ever been faithful, and as the deed was done whilst you slept or were absent, none can blame you. The Master we worship is a just God, to whom all things in the earth and in the hearts of men are revealed; and I make no doubt that in His sight, as in mine, you are blameless."

Then, as his eyes fell upon the pathetic traces of the old man's endeavour in a measure to repair the destruction that had been wrought, the leaves pieced carefully together, the little piles into which other undamaged pages had been carefully sorted, they grew moist with tears. In even more tender tones than he had yet used he continued: "You have done well, Mi-Kawa, to gather every fragment together; you have made a loving attempt to repair some of the

mischief wrought. To do much, however, is I fear impossible. I have other copies of the Seisho and of the hymn-books. But, Mi-Kawa, even though I had not, there would still dwell in my heart and in yours many of the Holy words, and also in the memories of others. Is it not so? Though they destroy the body of our faith, they cannot destroy the spirit."

Mi-Kawa only bowed his grey head and murmured, "It is as you, O Senkyōshi San, have said."

After he had helped the old man gather up every fragment of the torn books together, and had placed them in the cupboard of the vestry which had been broken open to get at them, Evelegh questioned him narrowly as to when and by whom he thought the sacrilege had been committed.

Mi-Kawa could tell very little. The act must have been accomplished, he said, between sundown on the previous day and nine o'clock in the morning, and it was doubtless committed by some of the more violent spirits to whom Jasō kyō was anathema; possibly it was instigated by the Buddhist priests of the pilgrimage temple in the Yake machi. There was apparently no material evidence save the splintered door, which had been roughly forced open. On the spotless matting of the little vestry the doubtless bare feet of the criminals had left no traces. But as Evelegh, whose eyes were not dimmed, as were Mi-Kawa San's, by age, narrowly examined the room, in one corner under a *prie-dieu* he caught sight of a small round object. Stooping quickly, he picked it up. It was a button

of a pattern such as is used upon the robe of a priest.

On seeing it Mi-Kawa cried out: "It is the *saishi* who have done this thing, O Senkyōshi San. But, nevertheless, Kameya also has without doubt had a hand in the evil work. Has he not given liberally at all times to the cost of the rites of the temple? and the *saishi* are not without wide mouths and open hands which the poor can never fill."

Evelegh recognised the serious aspect of the crime which had been committed. Behind it there might be, nay, there probably would be, as Mi-Kawa said, "Muchee great trouble." He felt that he must have time to think ere saying anything further to the old man. So he merely remarked: "See if you cannot repair the lock of the cupboard, Mi-Kawa San, and do not trouble or speak about the matter of the destruction of the Seisho and other books till I speak to you again. Keep a silent tongue within your head. There is no blame upon you. And remember that the Jasō you serve can not only keep you from harm, but also punish those who have done this act of wickedness."

Mi-Kawa's face became less troubled at his beloved teacher's words, and he replied slowly: "It shall be as you say, O Evelegh San. Mi-Kawa can keep silence."

Then, with a smile of encouragement, Evelegh left the old man to his task of mending the lock, and made his way once more out into the brilliant sunshine of a beautiful Japanese early summer day.

To complain to the Sonchō and the authorities, such

as they were, Evelegh knew well would be of little use. The former would make entries with Oriental deliberation in the huge book he kept for the purpose, would try to hide his hostility under an officially non-committal air, and then—except that the evil-doers (if known) would receive warning that the Senkyōshi had his suspicions—nothing would come of the complaint. So Evelegh went his way homeward up the steep hill-road, which in places was overhung with plum-trees, but a few weeks before in full glory of their mantle of silver-white blossoms, and now was fragrant with the scent of the pines and cherry blossom. He climbed the ascent sorrowfully, but he knew he would receive sympathy from Eileen and a courageous reception of the evil tidings. With all the feminine delicacy of temperament, which was one of her greatest charms, she possessed the quality of courage in crises in a marked degree, and an unswerving loyalty to truth and right which made her verily 'a queen among women.'

The gathering cloud which had obsessed Evelegh was not entirely dispersed when he reached the gate of his garden. It was not caused by fear for himself, but for the work he had in hand; for those who had come to him to hear the Jasō kyō, for Eileen, Rosamund, and for the sister who might arrive almost any day, and come into the tempest which threatened.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMING OF MYRA HELMONT

LATE that night a telegram arrived from Mrs. Thurston, which said :

"Myra went on to Nikko three days ago. Has probably left there already for Kin-shiu. Hope nothing amiss."

"So Myra is on her way," commented Evelegh, as he and Eileen pored by the light of his study lamp over the flimsy peach-coloured slip of paper on which the message was written. "I am glad for your sake, dear," he continued, "that she is to come. She will cheer you up, and be a companion for you. It must have been dull these last two years without a woman of your own race to speak to, except when little Mrs. Elison came over from Nikko."

"It's never dull with you, Chris ; you know that quite well," was the reply. And for a moment Eileen's slim, smooth, cool hand stroked her husband's troubled brow caressingly. "With you and Rosamund I pine for neither any other society nor any other world to interest me. Not," she added quickly,

"that I am not deeply interested in my school. But sometimes, Chris," she continued gravely, "I am afraid because I care for and love you and little Rosamund so much that there is little room for any one else, and I wonder—I wonder if I am not doing wrong. And then I try to remember that the Master Himself was the greatest example of human as well as Divine love, and I am comforted and go on loving you and Rosamund——"

"And incidentally," broke in Evelegh, "numbers of others, including little blind Iwane San, her crippled little brother Kuri, and—well, a long list of other people and children who, but for you, O Ku Sama (and the speaker smiled as he used the Japanese term), would be less happy and less tenderly cared for than they are. Do not trouble, my Eileen, there is not yet much of selfishness in your love. Though," the speaker added gravely, "one must not let the human interests of our lives obscure the Divine, and our duty to the great Teacher whose name is love."

For the time being these two—this man and woman knit together not by the mere conventional bond of marriage, but by temperament and like aims and ideals, and the desire to play their part nobly and well amid all difficulties and dangers which might come upon them—had so far forgotten the cloud which had earlier in the day troubled them that they were not only happy, but even cheerful. In their own uninterrupted society, which came with the close of each day when Villiers did not put in an appearance, they had, they often said, their reward

for the labour and disappointments of the working hours. In these times of quiet intercourse Evelegh and his wife had not only grown to know each other in the only way in which perfect accord and yet individuality are possible, but had plumbed some of the deepest depths of anxiety, and reached some of the greatest heights of inspiration and happiness. So engrossed were they with themselves and their topic of conversation, that for a moment or two they failed to hear the noise of shouting and disturbance which came from the road, usually at this hour silent and deserted enough.

At length the sound of Villiers' voice shouting, "*Tomare! Tomare! Dozo, Ko-chira!*" with the answering monotonous cry of the *karumaya*, "*He! kashkomarimashta.*" The command to stop, and the assent.

Evelegh and his wife started up with an exclamation of astonishment.

It was certainly Villiers' voice, and equally certain that some one was arriving.

Then they heard the sound of footsteps coming up the pathway from the gate.

Thrusting the *shoji* aside, both went out on to the veranda in eager search of a solution of the mystery.

The dim garden in front of the opened *shoji* was suddenly illuminated by the bright yellow beams from the powerful paraffin lamp, one shaft of light striking in its course the silvery mass of a blossoming tree, making it stand out across the roughly paved walk like some ghostly figure.

From away down the path to the road came the call of "Eileen! Chris! Are you at home?"

Then the watchers on the veranda knew that the long-anticipated, but not yet expected, guest had arrived.

A moment later, and before Eileen could get much farther than down the steps, a girl came running along the path, her arms outstretched in eager gesture to meet her kinsfolk.

"'Myra, dear Myra!—is it really you!" exclaimed Eileen, folding her sister in her arms. "How did you get here? How was it you never let us know, so that we might have come to meet you? I am half-inclined to be angry with you," exclaimed Mrs. Evelegh in a breath.

But Myra seemed to take no heed, for she thrust her sister at arm's length to see her, and then kissed her again and again, as she turned to Evelegh with a repetition of her exclamation of gladness.

In the background stood Villiers, unnoticed, and watching the scene with that air of semi-detachment which marks the intimate friend on such occasions, who cannot well withdraw, and who yet feels uncomfortably *de trop*.

"And now," said Eileen at length, "tell us how it is that you arrive before we expected you, and at such an hour? And why you did not let us know you were on your way from Nikko."

"To answer your questions in order," replied Myra Helmont, "I have come earlier than you seem to have expected for two reasons: one, because I wanted to give you a pleasant surprise; the other, because the

Thurstons could not come on with me to Nikko after all, and I did not like to presume upon the kindness of some friends of theirs with whom I travelled, and at whose bungalow I stayed for the night. Now for your second question. I have arrived at this somewhat unusual hour because I have done the journey since this morning. I started at three o'clock. My *kuruma* runners rested for two hours in the middle of the day at Ti-cho, and have gallantly brought me thirty-five miles or more, my immediately needed luggage and all, since we started. Your third question I have already answered in replying to the first. And now," added the speaker, with a smile of mingled amusement and embarrassment, " please Eileen or Chris be good enough to formally introduce me to the gentleman but for whose kind aid I might still—notwithstanding the phrase-book you so industriously compiled and sent me, Chris—have been searching for Senkyōshi San and the *bokushi kwan* down there in Kin-shiu."

At the words Villiers stepped forward, laughing.

" I have already introduced myself, Mrs. Evelegh," he said. " It was perhaps fortunate that I happened to have had to come in from the plantation to the town, and heard of the arrival of Miss Helmont. I found her "—and a smile of amusement at the recollection of the scene flitted across the speaker's face—" surrounded by a small crowd of curious and excited people—in which were Kameya and the Sonchō—reading from the aforesaid original phrase-book, and endeavouring to persuade the *kurumaya* (poor devils) to face the ascent to your bungalow.

They were volubly refusing, unless the Honourable Foreign Miss would at least double the *chadai* and give them half-an-hour's rest and refreshment in the attractive *chaya* hard by. In the end," Villiers continued, " I discovered who the Honourable Foreign Miss was, explained that I was—who I am, and, by dint of cajolery and promise of immensely increased *chadai* (amounting to about half a *yen* in all), I got the *kuruma* boys even to forgo their rest (they had some refreshment) and to bring Miss Helmont up here with very little delay——"

" For which," broke in the girl, " the said Myra Helmont will be everlastingly grateful."

" Hubert is a good sort," exclaimed Evelegh. "He has a most commendable habit, too, of generally turning up in the nick of time. But come, Myra, you must be tired out. Carry her off Eileen, and we'll see to her luggage. The coolies are bringing it up the path."

For a moment or two Eileen's figure and the much slighter one of her sister were silhouetted against the oblong patch of light which streamed through the pushed-back *shoji* ere they vanished within the house.

" I'm glad you turned up, old chap," said Evelegh. " It was rather a mad thing for the Thurstons to let Myra go on to Nikko without informing us, so that we might meet her. But all's well that ends well; and now she is here it will be all right. At least, I devoutly hope it may be."

There was a grave intonation in the speaker's voice as he muttered the last few words that caused Villiers to glance at his friend's face apprehensively.

"Nothing serious has happened?" he queried anxiously.

"Nothing very serious, perhaps, had it been a solitary incident; but, taken in conjunction with other things, I am rather disturbed. But we will not discuss the question now. Let us dismiss the matter, at least until the girls have retired."

"*Omachidosama!*" exclaimed two breathless coolies, as they staggered up to where the two men were standing, with Miss Helmont's 'necessary luggage,' in the shape of two substantial brass-bound trunks, upon their naked, bronzed, and tatooed shoulders.

"*Gokura sama*" (Many thanks for all your kind trouble), replied Evelegh politely. And then, as one of the men whispered almost under his breath "*Tabetai*, (I am hungry), O Senkyōshi San," Evelegh, with a smile, directed the two round to the kitchen at the back of the house, where he knew Sekio the cook would see that their needs in that respect were satisfied.

The two coolies vanished after depositing the boxes as directed on the floor of the veranda, and then Evelegh and Villiers entered the study and sat down to enjoy a pipe and await the coming of the ladies.

They had not long to wait, for Myra soon slipped out of her outer travelling garb into a loose turquoise blue *kimono* belonging to her sister. The two women formed one of those sharp contrasts sometimes found in sisters. Eileen was considerably above the average height, with a fair skin, dark grey eyes, and fair hair. She was more beautiful than pretty, and had an air

of dignity and repose which would single her out in a crowd as one possessing strength of character and as one who could be trusted. Myra, on the other hand, was an inch or two shorter, much slighter in build, and had dark, black-brown hair, almost violet eyes, and was pretty rather than really beautiful. Her features were more arresting than those of her sister, and the mouth had a line of singular sweetness dominating it. But in Myra one had a being who needed protection, rather than one to whom the weak could turn with confidence of succour in time of need.

When the two entered the study a few moments after—Mishima had deposited upon a small table a meal hastily got together for the traveller—the two men sprang to their feet. Evelegh drew his wife down into her own lounge-chair made of split cane, whilst Villiers drew up to the table for Myra a comfortable arm-chair, shabby, ancient, but capacious.

Then, constituting himself her attendant, Villiers seated himself in a chair hard by, and listened to the English news which, whilst she ate, Myra doled out to her eager listeners.

Villiers watched this animated girl, over whose delicate features the soft glow of the lamplight played, with that deep interest which is invariably aroused by the advent of a fellow-countrywoman in any part of the world where Englishmen dwell divorced, as it were, from the society of their own feminine kith and kin. A more critical man than Villiers would have pronounced Myra Helmont a singularly pretty and attractive girl ; whilst many,

when they saw her animated as she was then, might have even claimed the higher meed of beauty that somewhat irregular, though pleasing, features really denied her.

The mail came out to Kin-shiu but once or so in six weeks—unless any letter were sent by special coolie from Evelegh's or Villiers' agent in Nikko. And newspapers came even more seldom. So that every scrap of news Myra was able to impart had a value far above its usual one.

From general topics—discussed because of their greater interest to Villiers—the conversation gradually drifted into more personal channels; and, reluctant as he felt to go, Villiers recognised that even the claims of friendship should not be pressed unduly. He rose, and although both Evelegh and his wife pressed him to stay, he shook his head, and said that if he intended to get back to his bungalow before both his cook and boy were so sound asleep that nothing but an earthquake would wake them, he ought really to be off.

For an instant, as he shook hands with Myra Helmont, his eyes met hers with a gaze that he afterwards blamed himself for being too searching and too continued. A flush stole into the girl's cheeks, which had lost some of their usual colour from the fatigue of her sixteen hours' journey, and the heavily fringed lashes drooped over the violet eyes. It was only for an instant, however, and then her eyes met his quite frankly again as she said: "Good night, Mr. Villiers; again many thanks for rescuing me from an embarrassing situation, and

possibly also from a night of discomfort, if not worse, in Kin-shiu."

"It is nothing," was the laughing reply. "I am only too pleased to have been the means of bringing you to Mrs. Evelegh a little sooner; she has anticipated your coming so eagerly." Then he added—why he could scarcely tell: "May I hope we shall be great friends? You see, you are the only English lady here save Mrs. Evelegh, and somehow or other I feel we ought to be."

Myra Helmont paused for the fraction of a minute. Then she said: "I am sure to be friends with Chris's chum. And I only hope that you will not find me so ignorant, and so much a *griffin*, that you are tired of me before the first month is out."

"No fear of that, Miss Helmont," exclaimed Villiers cheerfully, and then, with a wave of the hand, he was gone.

When he had disappeared down the dim garden, where the shadows lay thick under an indigo sky in which the exquisite stars shone like the facets of diamonds, and the croak of the frogs resting on the lotus leaves in the tiny pools, and chirp of the cicadæ or crickets made strange weird music in keeping with the mysterious charm of a Japanese night, Eileen said: "It was lucky you met Hubert Villiers, Myra. What do you think of him?"

The girl made no reply for a moment or two. Perhaps because Villiers had in reality made a very definite impression upon her, although she had met him under such unusual and distracting circumstances, and had known him but a couple of hours or so.

Myra thought, too, that it was rather strange of Eileen to expect her to express any very decided opinion regarding him. He was their friend, it was true, and Chris's chum. But still—— So she paused ere attempting to answer her sister's question.

At length she said slowly: "What a strange question, Eileen! I have scarcely had time to consider the matter. But perhaps I am prejudiced in his favour from the fact that he did me a considerable service by arriving so opportunely upon the scene when I was surrounded by a mob of gesticulating and chattering Japanese, who, by the way, did not seem quite friendlily disposed. He is very good-looking, of course," she added slowly, and a faint flush stole in her face, "and—and I think he is a man a woman could trust." And then, after a slight pause, she said: "Of course, dear, he must be nice if you like him and he's Chris's friend."

Eileen laughed.

"Of course that goes without saying," she agreed. "But I want you to like Hubert as much as we do. You will see a good deal of him if——" And the speaker paused and glanced at Evelegh, who was listening with amusement to the conversation.

The latter knew to what contingency his wife referred. Was it less likely to happen now that Myra had come upon the scenes? Who could tell? He had often remarked that "Human nature is the one uncertain factor in the world's progress, just as its emotions and passions form the eternal surprises of life."

He knew that Eileen had pulled up in time. That

Villiers should be contemplating a 'mixed' marriage, however regular as regarded civil and ecclesiastical form, he knew must come as a shock of considerable magnitude if sprung upon a sensitive and refined girl. And were his wife's plan of campaign, in the hope of saving Villiers from a mistake which they realised some would regard almost as a crime, to be handicapped by too sudden knowledge upon Myra's part, failure was a foregone conclusion.

"If what?" not unnaturally inquired Myra, as her sister showed no inclination to complete her sentence.

"If he should remain on here," replied Mrs. Evelegh a little hastily and somewhat disingenuously.

"Oh! Is he thinking of leaving Kin-shiu then?" Myra inquired, with a forced indifference.

"One never knows what may happen in the East," replied Eileen. "That is one of the things that makes life interesting and full of change. But I hope Hubert is a fixture here for some time to come yet, for your sake and for ours."

"For mine!" exclaimed Myra, with a laugh—"why for mine? I have you and Chris, and I mean to stay until you are tired of silly little me, you two staid and serious folk; and as for Mr. Villiers—well, he may be very nice and all that, but luckily he is not essential to my enjoyment or my happiness."

The question of Villiers was then dropped. The conversation drifted once more into the ever-fresh and enchanting one to exiles, that of home. Every little scrap of news was told by Myra. How the old lady who acted as 'postman' in the far-off little

Buckinghamshire village, which had been Eileen Evelegh's home, had died in the winter. How the new schools had been built and paid for by the generosity of an old recluse, of whom, as children, both Eileen and the speaker had been mortally afraid. How the apple-tree which Eileen had planted on her twenty-first birthday had grown, and all the thousand-and-one other incidents which, trivial in themselves and wearisome to strangers, were yet of the deepest interest to both Eileen and her husband.

Forgetful that Myra must be tired, they sat up chatting till little Mishima, wakeful from fear though she had been for many nights, unable any longer to keep her eyes from closing, fell asleep beside baby Rosamund's cot, and Myra's own eyes were blinking. So they at last said good night, and Myra retired to her room, and soon fell into the heavy dreamless sleep following much fresh air and physical fatigue.

As Eileen heard Myra slide along the *karakimi* in their grooves, shutting up her small, box-like room, she said to her husband, somewhat regretfully: "I suppose she will have to be told of the disturbing events which have happened lately, and advised to return to the Thurstons?"

"Yes," replied Evelegh. "It would not be right for her to run the risk of the calamity which I feel is just now brooding over us."

CHAPTER VII

THE LOVERS OF KUSATSU SAN

SOME distance from the town itself, and almost on the hill-side above the fertile valley, stood the house of Kambara Kano, and in it he lived with his pretty daughter Kusatsu. It was like most other houses of the country-side, and of the scattered villages that lay amid the hills skirting the valley through which ran a branch of the Tone gawa. In the little garden surrounding the house grew irises and lotus, and in the summer a profusion of tea-roses, the delicate tints of whose petals rivalled those of Kusatsu's rounded cheeks.

And it was in this garden that Villiers had caught his first glimpse of Kusatsu as he passed along the dusty, ochre-hued road on his way from the town to the tea plantation. She had been very simply dressed in a blue cotton *kimono*, on which were printed sprigs of cherry blossom in white and rose-pink. But there was something in her attitude as she bent to pluck the irises, and something so plaintively pretty in her tender, fresh, girlish face, that Villiers had cast upon her more than a passing glance. Something had prompted him to inquire

of her the way to the neighbouring village of Shimodate, although he knew it well enough, and had been there several times.

"Straight on, Honourable Sir," replied Kusatsu San, smiling. And as she was speaking her father, Kambara Kano, came out of the house, his wrinkled face beaming with good-humour, and saw the stranger standing alongside his gate.

"*Kon nichi wa!*" exclaimed Villiers politely, as the old man bowed.

"*Kon nichi wa!*" the latter replied, adding, after a moment's hesitation, during which he carefully scrutinised Villiers, whom he had occasionally seen on his way to the tea plantation or in the streets of Kin-shiu, with the courtesy of the race, "*oagari nasai.*"

Villiers had hesitated for a moment to accept the invitation to enter, but another glance at Kusatsu San decided him, and he passed through the frail wicket of bamboo and came up the garden path. He had, in the course of his two years' residence in Japan, seen many Japanese *musumes*, not to speak of *geisha*, at the tea-houses and restaurants of Yokohama, in those of the Sanya, Fuka gawa, and in Uyeno Park at Nikko and elsewhere, but he had never seen the like of this fresh, charming, and dainty little figure, Kusatsu San. And in a flash he realised the fact.

"You will drink a little of our unworthy tea, most honourable traveller?" asked Kambara Kano courteously, as Villiers walked up the garden path in his company.

"Many thanks," replied Villiers with a smile. And at the word Kusatsu had vanished swiftly into the house like one of the soft-winged moths which come at sundown.

During the time which was consumed in drinking the 'honourable tea,' to tell the truth, Villiers' eyes and attention had been fixed far more upon the figure and ministrations of little Kusatsu than upon the face or conversation of her old father, who chattered so loquaciously and so respectfully concerning the most honourable fine weather they were having.

And little Kusatsu San.

Her heart, which had a long while ago been promised to young Tsunetaro Kuroki, the son of the merchant in Yama machi, had been set fluttering strangely at the sight of this big, honourable foreign Sir as she watched him drink the tea she had prepared with so much care. And down in the innermost recesses of her heart she was wondering whether she should ever see him again. She reckoned up the distance which lay between Shimodate, where she supposed he might dwell, and where she lived. It was but the matter of seven miles or so, and yet she had never been there in all her fifteen years of life.

The shadows lengthening in the garden outside had at last warned Villiers that he ought to be turning his face towards home. So he rose, and with polite expressions of thanks to Kambara San, he descended the garden path to the road in company with Kusatsu, and with a "Sayonaro" in answer to her soft "*Kon ban wa; Yoku nashaimasta*" ("Good

evening; I am glad you have come"), he walked rapidly away.

When he had reached the turn of the road he instinctively glanced back. O Kusatsu San was still standing amid her irises, with her hand shading her eyes from the rays of the rapidly declining sun, gazing after him.

Thus it came to pass that Villiers first met O Kusatsu San, whose advent had caused such anxiety to Evelegh and his wife.

Villiers had returned to the beautiful garden of Kambara Kano on many occasions since then, and each time the little daughter of the latter had a welcome in her eyes, as well as the spoken one '*Irasshai-maschi*' upon her lips. Indeed he had, during the four or five months which preceded Myra Helmont's arrival, spent a good deal of his spare time there.

If Kambara Kano had his suspicions of the true object of the 'honourable Foreigner's' visits, he kept them to himself.

Sometimes Kambara Kano, after a long day in his garden, or the fields in which he raised the more commonplace plants, would grow drowsy towards the late afternoon, and then O Kusatsu San and Villiers talked contentedly and quietly together at the end of the veranda until the old man fell asleep.

From the first there had been something singularly, and therefore dangerously, attractive to the exiled Englishman in the dainty simplicity, unworldliness, and even ignorance of the little Japanese *musume*, whose thoughts at first scarcely soared above the care

of her flower-garden, the ministering to her father's comfort, and possibly the colour and pattern of the next *kimono* she might purchase in the Yama-machi at Kin-shiu. Of English she knew none; nor did she realise that beyond the village and beyond Kin-shiu, distant comparatively but a few *ri*, lay quite another world from that she had ever known. The conversation did not flag, however, for Villiers had more than a 'working' knowledge of colloquial Japanese. When her father fell asleep he would attempt to teach Kusatsu a few words of English. They were just the words which cynics say are the only ones really necessary amongst all nations—those which permit of verbal love-making. Kusatsu San's first attempts at 'yes,' 'no,' and 'I love you' were such as made her teacher shake with suppressed merriment. And yet, notwithstanding the latter, he would have declared that Kusatsu's pronunciation of the last three words was sweeter than that of any one he had ever known.

From the first he felt assured that Kambara Kano would not raise much objection to his marriage with his daughter. In conversation with the old man he had made it clear to him that his position was a very good one, and although he did not for some time speak to Kusatsu San of his bungalow and his desire to marry her, he knew enough of Japanese customs to feel sure that it would be only necessary for her father to consent for her to marry him.

Obedience was, and indeed is, one of the prime factors in a Japanese woman's life; and love in the

European sense is a question which very seldom enters into the question of marriage.

And so, paying frequent visits to old Kano's house. Villiers had drifted on until, at the time when our story opens, he found himself with a definite future policy as regarded Kusatsu San.

. . . . . .

On the morning following the arrival of Myra Helmont, Villiers awakened with an unusual feeling that something important had occurred; something which was destined to play a vital part in the small circle in which he moved. Then he remembered; and the vision of Myra which was conjured up was, to judge from his face, a pleasant one. He dressed rapidly, and went out into the tea-fields on the hill-side on which his bungalow was situated. The men, women, and girls who were regularly employed looking after the delicate plants which in a few weeks' time would be ready for the harvest were already at work.

Amid the shiny green expanse of the hill-side, formed by thousands of tea-bushes planted in regular rows, the picturesque head-wrappers of the women—blue or white linen squares, on which was printed some tastefully simple pattern—so folded as to protect the beautifully done hair from disarray and dust and the head from the effects of the strong sunshine, and the gay-coloured *kimonos* of the children and elder girls, stood out in patches of colour like flowers in a wide expanse of green field.

Spread out before Villiers' eyes was a panorama of great beauty. All around him on the hill-side stretched

the myrtle green shrubs, extending down almost into the valley itself, and clothing the lower spurs of the mountain range. In the valley, well watered by the bright, quickly flowing Kitsune gawa, lay the rice-fields, upon which most of the inhabitants of the surrounding villages depended for their living. These from the height at which Villiers stood looked like grey-blue, irregularly shaped dice, divided one from another by the mud walls which retained the slush in which the young shoots had recently been laboriously planted. In the far distance was a great range of plum-blue mountains visible from the 'look-out' of Evelegh's house. Up above him the rugged volcanic peaks, split into a thousand fertile fissures, rose tree-clad midway to their summits. And over all the scene radiated the indescribably exquisite sunlight of a Japanese early summer morning.

As Villiers came across the fields in which all the workers were industriously tending the plants, the first picking from which was about to be made, he was greeted by a musical chorus of "Ohayo! Ohayo!" on every hand. Already the sun was getting so warm that some of the women had donned their huge mushroom-looking, tray-shaped hats of rice straw, split bamboo, or rushes, as their taste dictated, above the neatly arranged kerchiefs binding and protecting their hair. As the workers stooped to tend or examine the plants they were more than half-hidden by their headgear, and, seen from the hill-side above, the tea-fields seemed to be gradually transformed into mushroom gardens.

Here and there, farther down the hill, were rows of bushes capable of producing the better kinds of tea, which would fetch in the open market as much as sixteen to eighteen shillings a pound. These were protected by matting, and rising here and there were the ocre-coloured roofs of the drying sheds.

Villiers looked upon all these things with a glow of satisfaction. The tea-bushes were unusually robust; the tenderer plants, too, had been spared the keenest of winds and driving rains which the year before had prevailed with so disastrous an effect. Everything promised well, and the share that he had in the success of the crop would be so substantial a one as to bring his dream of a plantation of his own within measurable distance.

Osiki, the foreman, wrinkled and weather-worn, who as boy and man had worked for the firm whose overseer, or manager, Villiers was, beamed as though some of the glorious sunlight had penetrated beneath his weather-tanned skin, and was emitting a radiance.

"It is good, Villiers San," he remarked, as the former came up to him. "Truly shall we be able to label the first crop 'The dew of Heaven' this season, and the picking from the waterfall patch '*Ichi ban uroshi kin o'cha.*'"

Villiers laughed pleasantly. "The very best (or No. 1 best) honourable golden tea" was a description which would need 'living up to'; but this year the high-soundingness of it appeared likely to be justified, provided neither cold winds, hail, nor torrential rain should come to rob them at the last

moment of the fruits of ceaseless care and much labour.

"I will drink the first cup with you," replied Villiers, smiling at the old foreman's enthusiasm; "and then, Osiki San, I will the better tell you if our honourable tea is the best in the valley of the seven mountains."

Osiki allowed his face to smile. Over it spread the complete expression of satisfaction, assurance, or of happiness, which has, so far as we know, remained unanalysed, known as the 'Japanese smile.'

"O Villiers San," he exclaimed, as they walked along the narrow path of rich, reddish earth, which had been beaten hard during the rains by the constant tread of the watchers over the tea-plants, "it is not in vain that I have prayed to the Goddess of Plenty. Behold, she has heard, and in the fertility and beauty of the plant of the Honourable tea is her answer. Even," continued the old man, "the Jasō kyō of your friend the Senkyōshi San can do no more."

Villiers said nothing. It was scarcely the time for a theological discussion, and, moreover, Osiki was a dialectician of no mean order. Perhaps his silence aroused in the mind of Osiki the terrible fear that he had been impolite. As regards the purely religious aspect of his statement, he did not trouble. His religion was like that of many others of his race, a garment rather than a part of himself, and so he added hastily: "But in Jasō kyō must dwell some good, for Evelegh San is merciful, and his lady with the 'Moon-face,' has she not tended the child of

Ynagi, and of many others, and healed her after the doctors had burned deep into her flesh till one could smell the searing of it? And you, too, are not crooked in your dealings as are some; but are like the bamboo, which ever shoots upwards without a shadow of turning towards O-Hi-San, the august Lady Sun."

Villiers smiled at the speaker.

"In the years to come, Osiki San," he said, "believe me, Jasō kyō will teach your people many valuable things which shall fit them better for the great place in the world I foresee they are destined to hold. Shinto and Yudō will pass away like the mists which often hang so heavily between the setting of the sun and its uprising. The progress of Jasō kyō will not be that of the lightning which scorches the faces of men, but will be like the soft wind in the pine-trees, sweet and healing, uplifting the souls of men. That is the teaching of Senkyōshi San. It is no new teaching, though it is not so ancient as that of Buddha. Your priests cannot teach it, because there would be no need of the priest for those who believe in the Senkyōshi's God. No need of your gods, because there is but one God, not visible, but the Maker of all things, the great Father of the Nature which centuries ago your people worshipped."

Osiki was silent. He had heard the priests of the temple in Kasuga machi, to which he sometimes went to make an offering to the gods, say that the religion of the Senkyōshi was that of the devil, and that it poured contempt upon the worship of ancestors. But Villiers San had never let fall a word from his

lips derogatory to the departed, nor had he, Osiki, been able to find any one who had heard the Senkyōshi San do so. Some day, perhaps, he told himself, he would go and hear this Senkyōshi San, who had in his countenance the look of a brave man, who was so tall above other men and like a pine-tree, and whose wife had the face of the Lady Moon for whiteness and placid calm.

"We shall not see it, O Villiers San," he replied at length. "The Jasō kyō and the ways of the foreigner become known but slowly, and are accepted by few indeed. And when I was in Yokohama I did not see (as Evelegh San I am told says we should) that the *Shinjatachi* (Christians) were better, but found them often worse than ourselves."

Villiers kept silent, for was not what Osiki said in the main true?

By the time the conversation had reached this point Villiers and his companion had inspected all the parts of the plantation upon which the women and girls were especially engaged, and Villiers knew that the work would go on steadily till the time for the short midday rest and frugal meal of rice. As he turned his footsteps towards the bungalow—in which was also the 'Office'—he saw a familiar figure coming over the crest of a ridge along a path between the pines. It was little Kusatsu San, who, as she came into the full sunshine which streamed over the mountain spur in front of her, shaded her eyes and looked down at the tea plantation. In a moment her quick eyes had singled Villiers out, and turning aside a little from the path she was following

she took another, which led more directly down to the bungalow towards which she saw Villiers was making.

At the sight of Kusatsu, who seldom came to the plantation, and who had in fact been there but once or twice before, Villiers at first experienced a flush of pleasure. Then the feeling gave place to one of apprehension, because he had forbidden her to come to the bungalow unless on very urgent matters. He did not care for Osiki and the 'hands' to know more of his affairs than was necessary, and certainly not of his acquaintance with Kusatsu San.

When he saw her tiny, pale blue figure silhouetted against the dark background of the sombre pines, he felt inclined to sign to her to return and that he would follow her. But the opportunity passed, and the girl disappeared behind a rise in the ground.

Walking hastily, Villiers managed to arrive at the bungalow almost at the same moment as his visitor.

"*Ohayo!*" exclaimed Kusatsu, with a radiant smile, adding a polite inquiry after her lover's health, and then awaiting what he himself should say. But she waited in vain for the longed-for words which would tell her his pleasure at seeing her, and the polite invitation, '*Oagan nasai*,' to enter his dwelling.

But all the same, Villiers drew her up the steps of the veranda and into the bare little room which he called his study. There they would probably not be interrupted, but Osiki might return to the 'Office' at almost any moment to work at his accounts.

It was evident that Kusatsu San had come in haste. Under the folds of her sky-blue *kimono* her

bosom could be seen heaving tumultuously, and the thin silk of her under-garment, where the outer robe opened away at the neck in a V, fluttered to and fro with her hurried breathing.

"You have hastened, my Kusatsu!" exclaimed Villiers, pushing her gently into a lounge-chair, and himself sitting on the edge of one of its cane arms. "What is it that has brought you thus early? Have you forgotten that I told you not to come unless the matter was one of the greatest urgency?"

Kusatsu San did not reply for a moment, but held her tiny hands clasped close to her breast as though to still the beating of her heart, which was so rapid and distressing.

Obsessed by the idea of danger to her lover, Kusatsu San had run almost the whole distance of three miles which separated her father's house on the eastern spur of the hills from the bungalow of Villiers San, which stood on the southern slope. All along the dusty path, which at first skirted the hill-side and then plunged into the wood, where pines, maples, azaleas, and rhododendrons made a sombre or gloriously coloured picture, according to the seasons of the year, she had sped swiftly; and even when she came to the steep, upward slope through the thick belt of pines, and past the waterfall, which since Villiers' advent had been turned to such good account on the tea plantation, she scarcely paused, but, panting for breath, had still hastened.

When she spoke it was with tears in her eyes—tears forced into them by emotion, which not all the training she had had in common with other girls—

which went to teach her to control all evidences of the kind, lest her menfolk, or, when she married, her husband, should be annoyed—could enable her to disguise.

"I have not come thus, O Villiers San, without a cause. I came that I might see that you, my husband-to-be, are well—to see that nothing evil had befallen you whilst your servant slept. And now my eyes are rejoiced to see you as ever, like the straight bamboo which reaches toward the sun."

Kusatsu's distress and relief had been so self-evident that Villiers had not the heart to chide her further concerning the disobedience of which he had thought her guilty.

"Poor little Kusatsu San," he said, "and what is it that has troubled you? Have some of your flowers died, or have you dreamed, or what? Come, tell me."

With a look almost approaching adoration in its intensity of affection, Kusatsu gazed at the speaker. Then she said: "What are my flowers now when compared with you, O honourable Englishman? They might all die, but if you remained alive and near me I should scarcely miss them. And, alas! it was no dream that caused me to fear for you. Last night, when the Lady Sun had retired to rest, soon after I had seen you pass along the lower road on your way to the town, Tsunetaro Kuroki came up the hill-side to talk with my father——"

Villiers shifted his position on hearing this, and, rising, drew up an empty tea-chest in lieu of a chair, so that he might sit close to Kusatsu and listen to a story which he knew would be a lengthy one.

Outside, the sunshine flooding the wide expanse of tea-fields and hill-side and distant landscape with brilliant light, seemed strangely out of keeping with the small, tragically disposed figure in Villiers' bamboo chair.

"So Tsunetaro Kuroki San came to talk with thy father, O Kambara Kano San," exclaimed Villiers. "Well, what of that? Are you not mine, little Kusatsu, and is not my arm strong enough to hold and keep you?"

Kusatsu glanced at Villiers' stalwart figure, and a faint smile transiently irradiated her face.

"You speak well and truly, O wise one," she replied, "if it were only with his small strength and not with also his cunning he threatened you and me. Listen! and I will tell you what he said to my father, whose mind seems to change as does the wind."

"When Tsunetaro Kuroki San had seated himself," continued Kusatsu slowly, "he, with an angry face, said: 'I have come, O Kambara Kano San, to know when Kusatsu San, betrothed to me five years and more ago, is to be mine. What is it I hear,' he went on, 'concerning the visits of this *kettōjin*[1] who is at the bungalow of the tea plantation near the waterfall? How comes it that he is so often seen at thy gate, and in thy garden, O Kano San, talking with Kusatsu San, with his eyes looking into her eyes and his face, after the foreigner's way, near her face!'

"To all this," said Kusatsu San, "my father said nothing at first. Then he told Tsunetaro Kuroki

[1] Literally, 'hairy Chinaman.' A term of disrespect used generally on foreigners some years ago.

that he had altered his mind, and that he, Tsunetaro, was no longer the son-in-law that he required. 'You have no house to which to take my daughter Kusatsu,' he said, 'and you work little. Your father is a rich man, but he has many sons, and if I hear aright you are not the one to whom he gives or will give much. Do my ears deceive me, too, when I hear that O Moto San, at Karneya's *chaya* in Nidzumi machi, knows where most of the money you have goes?'

"Tsunetaro answered nothing at once," Kusatsu continued, "but I saw his face darken.

"'What matters it,' he said at length, 'the knowledge of O Moto San? Till I possess Kusatsu your daughter she surely is not robbed or injured by what I may do.'

"'True, true,' said my father, 'and if I will that she marry the rich Ijin San of the Waterfall Tea Plantation, she will never be robbed by you.'"

Villiers smiled. It was so obvious that old Kano San's liking for him was based upon the knowledge that, as Japanese of his class esteem wealth, he, Villiers, was a rich and prosperous man; but not a thought that Kusatsu knew or cared for what he might have troubled him.

"And what did Tsunetaro say to O Kambara Kano San thy father, little one?" asked Villiers, smiling at his companion's pretty, troubled face.

"He was consumed with a great wrath," replied Kusatsu. "'If that is thy answer, Kambara Kano San,' he exclaimed, 'I go. But let the *kettōjin* beware. May the gods witness that before Kusatsu, my promised bride, shall wed or go to him, he and I will

have had something to say to one another. Something which, sharp as bitter words are, is yet not words. It is not for nought that you break the contract for Kusatsu with me.'

"Something sharp as bitter words, but not words," repeated Kusatsu fearfully.

Villiers tried to bring a smile to her grave face, from which all the fresh rose-leaf colour, which usually beautified it, had fled as she reached the end of her narrative; but his effort met with no success. Before he could make up his mind what to say to reassure her, she spoke again.

"Tsunetaro," she continued, "after saying to my father the words I have told you, his face black as when the thunder-cloud lies on the summit of Kasuga yama, and his eyes like those of a wild dog seen in the forest at dusk, rose hastily to depart. There was evil in his heart towards you and me as well as in his eyes. As he passed by me where I stood on the veranda, just outside the room where he and my father had spoken, he took me by the arm roughly." Kusatsu turned back the wide, hanging sleeve of her *kimono*, and showed a black and sinister bruise upon the golden-hued skin, at the sight of which Villiers set his teeth hard, but not before an imprecation had passed them boding harm to Tsunetaro Kuroki next time they should meet. "And as he did this," continued Kusatsu, he hissed into my ear terrible threats such as no one should make to a woman, so that my heart almost stopped beating at the very thought of the horror of which he spoke.

"There are things," went on Kusatsu painfully and

slowly, "that it is not good to hear; deeds against the doing of which not the strength of my Villiers San can avail. So was it that I came with all haste to you, strong and noble one, even at the risk you should be angry."

"I am not angry with you, O Kusatsu San," replied Villiers gently and with a serious face. "It was good that you had it in your mind to come. But fear nothing. I have a strong arm, and I shall watch and not sleep. And if Kuroki San molests you, come to me at once. It will not be long ere I pay the reckoning that is due to him for this." And the speaker lightly caressed the bruise upon the little bare arm.

"No, no!" exclaimed Kusatsu in evident distress. "Leave Kuroki the evil one alone I pray you, my Villiers San. Leave him to O Moto San, and hope that in her singing he will forget me, and no longer desire to possess me. It is best not to kick the mongrels which lie at the street corners."

"But if he touches you, Kusatsu?" persisted Villiers.

"It is not the touching of myself that I fear, or that has brought me to you to-day. So long as no ill befalls you, whose presence is like the sunshine, and absence like a night in the month of rain, it is well. Sleep not, O my Villiers San, for if aught befell thee thy unworthy Kusatsu, who is not fit for you to look upon so tenderly, would never again see the dawn."

After trying to reassure her, Villiers said that he would accompany her to the bend of the hill-side path

from whence her home was visible, and they set out through the tea-fields, and then upwards through the pine wood, the resinous odour from which was strong and fragrant from the warmth of the sun.

After they had parted, Kusatsu hastened home only in a slight measure reassured. In her heart there dwelt the horrible thought which had been brought to life by the words of Tsunetaro Kuroki —the dread that hatred would prove more watchful than knowledge, and that she, Kusatsu, could not stand between her lover and his enemy.

In her tender heart, into possession of which Villiers had so completely entered, there dwelt the nameless fear that women have in respect to their loved ones, and not even the sunshine and the exquisite flowers of her garden, which she loved so well, could entirely drive away the sense of care. Yet Kusatsu San, had she but known, was destined to be strong and brave enough to present the insurmountable barrier of a great and absorbing love between death and the man from whom she had just parted.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STRANGER IN THE GARDEN

MYRA HELMONT had now been a week at the Mission House. A week that had served, naturally sympathetic as she was, to bring her into close touch with the life of her brother-in-law's household. This Japanese home, its delightful garden, its quaint customs, and interesting events and surroundings, was an ever-present delight. She was not exactly new to the East, but to all the smaller intimacies and unimportant things of such a life as she now led she came with the enthusiasm of a receptive and acceptive personality. Before she had been at Kin-shiu three days, both Evelegh and his wife had found some of the gloom and fears which had lately overhung their formerly unclouded domestic sky disappear amid the sunshine of Myra's cheerful presence and the interest which she evinced in everything.

On the third morning after her arrival, as all three, with baby Rosamund sprawling contentedly on the spotless matting at their feet, sat on the veranda at breakfast, chatting of the far-off English home, and speculating as to how long it would be ere the

cherry-tree blossoms fell, Myra had suddenly exclaimed :

" Notwithstanding that this is Japan and you are so far from us in England, Eileen, you are a lucky woman. This dear little plaything of a house is delightful. And the garden ! Well, it is not like anything I have ever seen before. The little sanded paths are only fit for fairies to tread, nothing larger than a walnut-shell boat paddled by a dragon-fly with fir needles for oars could float down your tiny river ; and the trees—most of them—are only fit for pots on a dining-room table. And yet what an air of vastness old Kojo has brought about ! Then there is Chris, and Rosamund, and that little sweet-faced maid of yours, Mishima. There is no question that you must find me a missionary," laughed the speaker gaily, " then I can settle down perhaps near you, and always have such a house and garden, and everything like you."

Eileen Evelegh smiled.

At the back of her mind, since Myra's arrival, as before she came, dwelt the idea connecting her pretty sister and the lonely man over at the tea plantation, who seemed very possibly about to " make a mess of his life," as her husband phrased it. With an affectionate and admiring glance at Myra's graceful figure in its simple white muslin frock, and the charming face over the wide, low brow of which, untidy perhaps but nevertheless delightful, wisps of dark wavy hair rebelliously strayed, Eileen said slowly :

" I am afraid, dear, I may not be able to find you a

missionary, and," with a roguish glance at her husband, "all are not like Chris, but perhaps I might——" And then she broke off abruptly, and somewhat strangely Myra did not question her or ask her to finish her sentence, whilst a deeper shade of colour flashed suddenly into the prettily rounded cheeks as she suddenly bent over her coffee-cup.

"To be the wife of a missionary at a station like Kin-shiu," interrupted Evelegh gravely, though not unkindly, "Myra, is not quite as you picture. Placed amid beautiful surroundings which do much, I admit, to mitigate at least some of the trials of exile, there are"—and the speaker paused and glanced at his wife—"difficulties and even dangers sufficient sometimes to appal the strongest heart. And yet"—and the speaker's face lit up with the smile which was so attractive and winning an attribute of this strong man's personality—"it is just those dangers which make the work so compelling in its appeal to one's highest aspirations. But that brings me to a question upon which Eileen and I have been intending to speak to you ever since you came."

Myra glanced at her sister in curiosity, and was surprised at the latter's grave face.

"What is it, Chris?" she asked, as he did not at once go on speaking. "Something serious, I am afraid, to judge from Eileen's face. I meant nothing wrong by saying she must find me a nice missionary."

"No, no, of course not," said Evelegh, smiling in spite of himself. "It was not that at all. You see, Myra," he went on, "poor Collins made a good many enemies—perhaps it was not easy for a man of his

temperament to do otherwise—he never understood the natives, nor that sometimes one must not press onward ruthlessly when there is no betrayal of either one's Master or one's convictions in holding back. As a result there is in Kin-shiu, even to-day, a strong, active, and even dangerous anti-Christian and anti-missionary party, composed of the Buddhist priests, the keepers of one or two disreputable resorts, a handful of officials, and a considerful number of the lower class who have been taught to regard Christianity as subversive of their beloved Emperor's authority, although of course that is not so at all. Only a few days before your arrival we had several unpleasant and even disturbing experiences, and had it been possible to do so we most certainly should have communicated with you, and advised you not to come to us, at least for the present."

As the speaker paused Myra's face lost some of its brightness and gaiety, and the smile that had illumined it at the commencement of the conversation had disappeared.

"I am very glad that you could not find me, and so didn't write," she said at length, just as Evelegh was about to continue what he had been saying. "I don't think I should have obeyed even you, Chris," she went on, with just a faint flicker of the smile returning to her face.

Evelegh himself smiled, for he knew that he was no terrible person, as seemed suggested, to his pretty young sister-in-law.

"I hope you would have done so, Myra," he remarked. "But seriously, dear, Eileen and I feel

that you should know—now you have arrived—that much as we have looked forward to your coming, it would be best for you to return to Nikko. It is scarcely safe here just now for any foreigner, least of all for any one connected with the Mission, however remotely."

The speaker paused to see the effect of his words. In his heart of hearts he knew perfectly well what the answer would be. Young, and in a sense frail though she was, and far less firm of character than Eileen, she was a soldier's daughter. Often when his wife had shown courage in an emergency, for which he had thanked her and praised her, she had laughingly said, whilst she flushed with pleasure and happiness :

"You mustn't give me the credit, Chris dear. I'm not really at all brave where you or Rosamund are concerned. And where I am, it is only a case of what's bred in the bone will come out in the flesh."

Myra looked at her brother-in-law fixedly for a moment. Then she said very quietly, whilst her bosom heaved a little more rapidly beneath the thin fabric of her muslin blouse :

"You don't know me, Chris, or us Helmonts, after all, if you think that the reason you have advanced is a good one in my eyes." Then she saw that she had pained him a little, and added hastily : "Forgive me, Chris, but you couldn't really expect me to leave Eileen, and you, too, dear, simply because you think there is some danger from the natives. I shall stay on—that is, unless you drive me away. Will you? Both you and Eileen need cheerful company," she

urged earnestly; "you have been getting the blues, although you have such a lovely place to live in and such sunshine. And—and Rosamund."

"No, I shall not send you away, my dear," replied Evelegh, taking both her hands in his and gazing affectionately and steadily into the depths of her violet eyes; "but we both of us thought that you should know. That was all."

"Now I do know, I am going to stay just as long as you will have me. And I'm going to make myself awfully useful and nice to you both, you dear, fussy old things. Perhaps even to my rescuer, Mr. Villiers, as well."

Eileen smiled.

During the rest of breakfast she wondered vaguely, between interruptions from Rosamund and Myra's home chatter, what would result from so pretty and charming a girl as Myra making herself very nice to Hubert Villiers.

Who indeed could tell?

She had discussed with her husband the desirability or otherwise of telling Myra of, or hinting at, Villiers' attachment to Kusatsu San. They saw the difficulty. Although Myra was no prudish, unsophisticated girl, it would come as a shock to her that a man of Villiers' type could contemplate marriage with a Japanese woman of the people, however charming she might be. The circumstances would probably come to Myra's knowledge soon enough. As for Villiers, he could be trusted not to play with the girl's affections. He was a gentleman through and through.

So long had the little party at breakfast on the veranda sat chatting over the meal that, ere Mishima came hovering silently in the background to take the things away, some of the children had commenced to arrive for morning school, and Eileen, leaving Rosamund in Myra's charge, was forced to hasten away to her class.

Christopher Evelegh lingered a few moments making suggestions to Myra for a pleasant spending of the morning, and then he too vanished to consider the letter he had determined to write to one of the officials in Nikko who was favourable to Christianity although not a professed Christian, and to Edward Dorrington, an English merchant friend in whose discretion he had full and complete confidence.

As he sat down to his desk, he glanced out through the open *shoji* and saw Myra and toddling Rosamund making their way down the garden path to the look-out at the far end on the hill-side above the town.

"Auntie, darden, pitty flowers. Me pick oo some," came clearly to him in Rosamund's high-pitched baby tones on the still morning air, as he took up his pen and commenced to write, as though they vibrated along the motes of sunlight ere reaching him.

He had decided to communicate the state of affairs to Dorrington and the Japanese official after lengthy reflection. It was possible, he thought, that a sudden necessity for assistance and even succour from Nikko might arise. He knew that the official in question, the Chen-Shō, was an acquaintance and might even be called a friend of Edward Dorrington, and that in

an emergency the latter would strongly urge upon the former promptitude of action.

Somehow or other he felt that Myra's bright and cheerful presence, and her courageous acceptance of any danger that might threaten, had heartened him in a way that even Villiers' courage and optimistic treatment of the situation had not succeeding in doing. He had learned how true had been Colonel Helmont's words with reference to the terrible days of Lucknow, still fresh in many a survivor's memory, though many years had elapsed since the tragic drama of men's bravery and women's courage and endurance had been played beneath the burning Indian sun : " The courage of weak women is a thousandfold more inspiring than the most dauntless bravery of strong men."

As he took up his pen his father-in-law's words came to his mind, and he smiled at the memory of Myra's pretty, determined face, and clear, searching eyes. He wrote :

" Mission House, Kin-Shiu.
" *April 28th*, 18—.

" Dear Dorrington,

" It is some time since I wrote you and I feel rather ashamed of my negligence. I have, however, been very busy, and in addition circumstances have arisen which have taken up much of my time, that otherwise might have been devoted at least in part to pleasant correspondence—the answering of letters from various friends. I am now writing you upon a rather serious matter, and I shall be grateful if you will give me your opinion upon the situation which has arisen here in Kin-shiu. Please, in giving this, take into full consideration my position as a minister

of Jesus Christ, as to advise me as a man with no particular duty to perform other than to himself, his wife, and his child would be superfluous. I know what that would be.

"Briefly, then, things, which were left in an unsatisfactory and an unsettled state by poor Collins, have recently been going from bad to worse. From tacit opposition, and occasionally that of a half-hearted and disguised type, many of the poorer people, led, I believe, by the two priests (whose names I gave when I last saw you in Nikko) and the Sonchō, have been overtly hostile and threatening. Only a few days ago the Dendō kwan was broken into, and our Bibles and hymn-books destroyed. Upon the walls were written all the terrible things that have in the past been said or written of Christians and the Christian faith. All the old accusations, all the old threats. In addition to this I have received several warnings, not only from Villiers, who knows the people better than I do, but from several of my small flock, and from one or two well-wishers, or at least not ill-wishers, who may possibly after all only desire to avoid a disturbance, which, whatever the result at the time, would inevitably lead to inquiry, and possibly punishments and reprisals by the central authorities, if representations were made in official quarters by our Minister.

"I have wanted to send my wife and little girl to you, or to the McAlpines in Yokohama. But, as I quite expected, my wife has refused to leave me or desert the work. And now the situation is in a measure complicated by the arrival of her sister. We have, as you know, been expecting the latter during the last two months almost at any time. It is unfortunate that she should have arrived at what appears likely to be a crisis in our work.

"Now you know all the facts, and can doubtless

advise me. At least, I know you will take some steps so that should serious trouble ensue, and I am able to get a message through to Nikko, assistance may be promptly sent. Fortunately the telegraph clerk is not hostile, but the reverse. My wife nursed his through a serious illness, and when I had persuaded him to dispense with the old medicine man, who was giving her pounded frogs' legs and other more nauseous concoctions, I prescribed for her and she got rapidly better. He has ever since been sincerely grateful, and has on occasions attended our services. Two of his children come to us to school.

"I hope, dear Dorrington, you will not put me down as an alarmist. I am not that. But it is the essence of unwisdom to be reckless and unprepared.

"Let me hear from you soon. The sooner the better. And remember that home news, however scrappy, is doubly welcome in such an out-of-the-way corner of the world as Kin-shiu.

"I hope you are all well. When are you and your wife going to pay us the long-promised visit? With every kind remembrance from us both.

"Yours ever sincerely,

"CHRISTOPHER EVELEGH.

"MR. EDWARD DORRINGTON."

When he had finished the letter Evelegh read it carefully through. It did not seem to him to overstate the case, or to be alarmist in tone. Nor to invite official interference at this stage. So he folded it, sealed it, and placed it aside for dispatch when next any one went down into the town. Then he turned to the letter to the Chen-shō.

In this he was much more guarded. He merely intimated that difficulties had threatened several

times of late, and that in event of serious trouble he hoped the officials would render prompt assistance. And that the Chen-shō would meantime report to head-quarters the breaking into the Dendō Kwan and the destruction of the Bibles.

By the time Evelegh had written these two letters, and had gone into several small matters of business connected with the Mission Hall down in Kin-shiu, school was out, and Eileen came through the house on her way to find Myra and Rosamund in the garden. She came along the veranda and peeped in through the open *shoji* at her husband. His face was serious, although he smiled as soon as he caught sight of her.

"I'm afraid you're worrying, Chris," she exclaimed anxiously, coming in and seating herself on the edge of his desk. "There is nothing fresh, is there?" she inquired gravely. "I had thought the last day or two things had seemed brighter, and you remember what old Mi-Kawa said—that since the Dendō kwan was broken into several of the people down in Nitushi machi had expressed their sorrow, especially old Kango Maru and his wife that I told you were at last coming to see the light."

"No, there is nothing fresh, little woman," replied Evelegh, stroking the slim, white, cool hand which rested on his shoulder. "In fact, I do think that things are less disturbing than they were a week or ten days ago. It is only that I have been writing to Dorrington and the Chen-shō, and telling them of the trouble we have been having. And perhaps that has served to revive my disquietude as regards you,

Rosamund, and Myra. I ought perhaps to banish it from my mind. You had better go down the garden, and in a few minutes I will join you. Myra will think us a poor host and hostess if we leave her too long alone."

Eileen vanished through the *shoji*, and he heard her footfall grow fainter and fainter along the veranda, down the wooden steps, and across the flagged walk running along the front of the house, and then, as it died away down the sanded path, Evelegh sighed. Sometimes, in spite of his strong faith, his love of the work, his great passion for influencing men for right, he felt, as do all those who are destined to accomplish anything in the world, dispirited and depressed at the slow progress made. It was with difficulty, indeed, that he sometimes threw off the feeling of depression. But this morning the feeling left him, as he went out into the delightful garden, which, beautiful and quaint when he came to it, had doubled and trebled in charm and beauty under the skilful hands and inventive brain of Kojō Omato, a great artist though a diminutive man, who, having embraced Christianity whilst an apprentice to one of the most famous of landscape gardeners in Tokio, had come back to his native town of Kin-shiu, and had, on the arrival of Evelegh, insisted upon making him a garden.

It was a wonderful thing—like nothing that either Evelegh or his wife had ever seen before. And the fashioning (there is no other word which so well describes the operation) of it had given hours of astonishment and pleasure to Eileen during the first

months of their residence at Kin-shiu. It was only a small corner of their demesne on the hill-side above the town, after all; but within its comparatively restricted area was so much that one might, by half-closing one's eyes, seem to be in the completest garden of a palace.

Kojō Omato had adapted all the most salient features of the surrounding country-side to his artistic ends. In this little corner he had reproduced, in exquisitely proportioned miniature and excellent perspective, the surrounding hills, the valley, the river which wended its way through the latter towards Nikko and thence to the open sea, and the forest which lay in the beyond along the Nikko road. The strip of sand was the shore of a miniature lake, a thread of water the river, and a bank of earth a few feet high a range of miniature hills.

In it, too, were tiny pagodas and shrines, and at the edge of the lake (a tiny pool about twelve feet by seven) was a miniature *torii* such as one often sees, solitary, impressive, and mystical, standing on the edge of the Inland Sea.

Each of these things was so delicately adjusted to the whole scheme as to add to the completeness of the illusion produced; whilst the miniature representations of hills, rocky torrents, lakes, and forests were so beautifully proportioned, that even after months of acquaintance neither Evelegh nor his wife had lost interest, nor had they detected any anachronism which could destroy the delightful sense of spaciousness which this tiny garden of a real artist (smaller than many a suburban villa lawn) conveyed.

Myra had been rendered almost speechless on first acquaintance. It was surely a garden of elves and fairies, of the 'little people' who, in some guise or other, appear in the folk tales of almost every land. "And yet," as she said to Eileen, "it is a garden in which, when viewed from a distance and in the right spirit, one could surely lose oneself, and only suspect of smallness when one seeks to tread its tiny paths, scale its miniature mountains, or ford its trickling river."

It was at the end of this garden, in a bend or hollow of it near the hill-side, that Evelegh found Myra, Eileen, and Rosamund seated on the rustic bench which he and Villiers had made.

"You have come just in time," exclaimed Myra. "I have this very moment been telling Eileen of the quaint man, he seemed like a woodman or pedlar, I don't exactly know which, in a blue *kimono*, who has been jabbering at Rosamund and me. I didn't even know he was in the garden until I suddenly turned round to find him bowing and scraping on the path, and jabbering something which I believe was apologetic or complimentary, or perhaps both. Then he heard some one, it was Eileen coming down the path, and whilst I turned to greet her he vanished just as though he had disappeared into the mountain-side or the ground beneath his feet."

"What was he like?" asked Evelegh slowly.

"Oh, very much like any other Japanese," laughed Myra. "I saw scores like him along the road on my way from Nikko. But let me see, I think, I am not sure, that he had a scar on the left side of his face.

Rosamund here called him 'uggy,' and a 'bad man,' but I don't think there was any harm in him."

Evelegh's face had become troubled as he heard Myra's account. But as he was standing almost with his back to her, looking out over Kin-shiu, she did not notice the fact, and Eileen said nothing. She knew the man with the scar on his left cheek.

"Children," remarked Evelegh at length slowly, "are sometimes wonderful readers of character, Myra."

And then he turned the subject, and pointed out all the different beauties of view which till that morning had never been entirely visible since Myra's arrival.

All the while his mind was engaged in trying to fathom the reason for the presence of Tetsuya Mori in the garden.

CHAPTER IX

THE ARROW AND ITS MESSAGE

THAT evening it so happened, when Hubert Villiers arrived at the Mission House, Evelegh was absent down in Kin-shiu and Eileen was putting little Rosamund to bed.

Mishima, who answered his summons, made by clapping his hands vigorously, after the usual *Omachidosama* (I am sorry to have kept you waiting), explained, with charming humility and deference for 'the great and important friend of the Senkyōshi San,' where Evelegh had gone and how O Ku Sama was occupied. Then she told him, with many adjectives of respect, that at the end of the garden he would surely find O Bo San (literally 'the honourable Aunt') of that wonderful child Rosamund. Villiers laughed, for Mishima was a quaint little soul, who always treated him with the most exaggerated deference, and once, when he had tried to kiss her tender, piquant face, had shown most amusing alarm, and told him that she thought he was about to bite her! Then he went down the garden to the look-out.

Myra heard his footsteps, and turned to see who

was approaching. Even in the half-twilight Villiers must have seen, if he had looked at her closely enough, a faint flush steal into her cheeks. Smiling a greeting, she for a moment turned away and looked out over the wide prospect of valley, town, and hill-side which lay spread out before and below her. And when she once more turned to him, it was with a frankness devoid of embarrassment.

As Villiers approached along the path leading to the spot where she stood, with her graceful figure outlined by the clinging folds of her silken gown and silhouetted softly against the fading rose and saffron tints of the twilight sky, it was not unnatural that the remembrance of the other woman in the little dwelling on the hill-side along the road to the tea plantation of the Seven Waterfalls should project itself on to the screen of his mental vision. The comparison was inevitable, and had nothing to do with logic or environment.

"Chris has had to go down into the town," exclaimed Myra, with a smile of welcome, putting out her hand and clasping his strong, cool fingers, "and Eileen is worshipping at the shrine of St. Baby, and incidentally putting that tiny morsel of mischievous humanity to bed. So you see," Myra added banteringly, "you will either have to amuse yourself or me."

Villiers laughed contentedly, and said :

"You don't think, Miss Helmont, that to do both at one and the same time would be possible."

"Who knows?" replied the girl, turning away and resting her elbows on the strong bamboo rail which ran along the top of the fence, and gazing down into

the sheer drop beneath her, and then away across the town to the distant and rapidly fading mountains in the west. "But are you willing to try?"

"Quite," replied her companion, lighting a cigar. "It ought not to be a difficult task. You appear to me, Miss Myra, one of those happy souls who are able to take the best out of life and their immediate surroundings, and one who would make few mistakes."

There was a pause, and the girl continued gazing at the distant and now fast disappearing landscape for several moments without speaking. She was wondering why the man at her side should have spoken as he had done. She had been and was happy in her own way, as he said, taking the best out of life as it offered itself. But—it was just this 'but' that she had debated with herself that very morning as she lay, with her face flushed with awakening dreams, and resting upon her bare and rounded arms on her lowly, mattress-like bed in the spotless room which had been allotted to her, watching the golden sunlight filtering softly through the translucent paper panels of the *shoji*. And after half an hour of meditative self-inquest she had admitted, with a blush, though there was no one to see or know her thoughts, that from the moment Villiers had come up to the side of her *jinrikisha* at the corner of Nezumi machi and Bungo machi, and had rescued her from her environing crowd of chattering and gesticulating Japanese, without him the best in life for her would not henceforth be possible.

The fact that she had been courted and flattered

by not a few men since she was free from the schoolroom, and had seen something of life, made this silent confession to herself the more weighty and significant. She knew, as every true woman does who has a like experience, that the impinging of Hubert Villiers' life upon hers was destined to be momentous, and that either for happiness or the reverse—that it was no mere passing fancy, she had in her heart no manner of doubt. For this very reason she had discussed him not at all and referred to him but little in conversation either with Evelegh or her sister.

At length she replied, without turning her face to her companion :

"I am afraid you have far too high an opinion of my judgment. Most women, I fancy, make more mistakes than men luckily know of, or at all events realise."

Villiers smiled. There were some women, he thought, whose charm evoked a desire to pay compliments which were difficult of phrasing. At all events, to fence words with Myra Helmont, though invigorating, was not without risk.

"Perhaps you are right," he rejoined, trying to catch a glimpse of her face as he leaned farther over the rail, "but equally many women possess virtues quite unsuspected by the average man. After all, Miss Myra," he went on, "it is the merely obvious which is most tiresome, and——"

"And," broke in the girl, with a laugh and a quick, shy glance at his face, which was quite close to hers, "we will now quit philosophy and speculation, and

you shall tell me, if you will, something about the lovely valley—it ought to deserve the name of 'The Happy Valley'—and what I can still see of the country."

"Certainly," said Villiers quickly; "but I should have thought that Evelegh and your sister would have made any further description superfluous. If they have not, here goes. I am afraid that the valley, beautiful though it is under almost all conditions, and scarcely ever more so than at twilight, cannot be described in the ecstatic terms you suggest, though it is no worse than most places of the kind in Japan and elsewhere, and far better than some. I hope you may be able to explore it a little; I shall be delighted to escort you. It will be much more beautiful in a couple of months' time, when the summer flowers are out. To see the woods in their glory, however, you will have to wait till the autumn; then they are gorgeous. The maples alone make a riot of colour, which an American artist, who was painting here last season, said made him wish to put all the reds, browns, yellows, and even blues of his colour-box on his palette and then mix them up blindfold and apply according to the usual recipe. The hill-sides above the town and my plantation form a sight not easily forgotten in the late summer and early autumn.

"As for Kin-shiu itself," Villiers continued, "there is not much to be said for it. It is just like half a hundred others scattered throughout the district, with perhaps just a little more of the undesirable element in its composition, owing to local

conditions, into which it could be little interest to you for me to enter. I have known it some years now, and frankly, if Providence or fortune, whichever you like, had not ordained that my living should be found here, I fancy I should have been glad to leave it long ago. The East is all very well until one is tied to it, and then, well——" The speaker shrugged his shoulders eloquently.

"But you are happy in your work?" queried Myra. "You have good prospects, so Chris and Eileen tell me."

There was an intonation in the speaker's voice which caused the man at her side to glance at her quickly and searchingly. To him something seemed to underlie the remark. How much or how little did she know of his relations with little Kusatsu San? Perhaps, and this seemed likely, nothing at all.

"Oh, fairly happy," he replied lightly, after a pause. "I have no one over me, and the crop promises remarkably well. And, of course," he added, with a tinge of bitterness, "that should satisfy any reasonable being, and especially a tea planter, Miss Helmont. Don't you think so?"

"How can I tell?" was the reply. "Perhaps you have aspirations beyond the average. But I fear most men I know would be fairly contented with such conditions as you describe. I should so much like to see a real tea plantation," she continued. "I have very little idea what it is like. I must get Chris and Eileen to bring me over—that is, if lady visitors are not unwelcome."

And then, before Villiers could answer, the speaker added :

"I believe we are coming one day this week quite a way along the road towards the Seven Waterfalls. Eileen wants some more flowers for this charming garden of hers, and she declares there are none like those supplied by an old florist named Kambara Kano. And then Eileen tells me, too, that the old man has one of the most charmingly pretty little daughters in all Kin-shiu. I am quite curious to see her, because, to tell the truth, I have not seen half so many pretty girls and women since I landed as I had been led to expect I should, and far more ugly ones. You know the little girl, I suppose?" continued Myra, and as she spoke she turned her head and looked full at Villiers.

"What did she know?" was the first thought which came into his mind. It was impossible to say. So rapidly had twilight come on that the girl's face, which was turned away from the last gleam of light in the Western sky, had now only the soft indistinctness of an old pastel whose sharper outlines have been blurred by time, and though he looked narrowly he could discover no indication to guide him.

"Yes," he replied at length, as indifferently as he could, "I know Kusatsu. She is charming, and her father Kambaro Kano is quite a character in his way. You should certainly see the old man's garden ; it is wonderfully beautiful. In June, when the irises come, it is so exquisite that people from the town come out to it as they would to an exhibition. You must see it then."

"I hope I may," replied Myra; "but do you know, Mr. Villiers, I am almost more anxious to see the gardener's daughter than the garden. Eileen has somehow or other aroused my curiosity in her. I have heard of Mr. McBride, who married a Japanese girl, and I have been wondering how it is that he should have done so. They must be very fascinating to break down the prejudice that I should have thought existed——"

The speaker paused, and Villiers broke the silence with a short and rather constrained laugh.

"I am afraid the average man has few prejudices against a pretty girl of whatever nationality," he said.

"No?" questioned his companion a little stiffly; adding, after a moment, "But I do not think you——?"

The two had been so deep in their conversation that they had not heard the rustling in the bushes on the hill-side, nor the crackling of the fallen twigs of yesteryear.

Instead of finishing her sentence Myra gave a sudden, startled cry.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Villiers anxiously.

"I don't exactly know, but something has struck me," replied the girl a little faintly.

She seemed as though she were about to fall, and Villiers placed a hand on her shoulder; and then, finding this insufficient to steady her, an arm round her waist. As he did so and she leaned towards him, his leg struck against something in the back of her

skirt, which stuck out from the fabric midway between the knee and ankle.

In the dim light it was impossible to see exactly what this was, and, as Myra seemed to be half-fainting, he decided that it would be best to return at once to the house.

"Can you manage to walk if I give you my arm?" he asked anxiously.

"I think so," replied the girl, pulling herself together. "Let us try, at all events."

A few steps, however, served to convince Villiers that walking, if not actually impossible, was a painful effort. Suddenly it crossed his mind that delay might mean serious danger, that whatever had happened might be but the forerunner of something even more disastrous. He was not a moment in making up his mind. Stooping quickly, he took Myra in his arms.

"You must not mind," he said, as he felt her for the moment tremble and resist. "Believe me, it is best. You are hurt, and we must see what it is as speedily as possible."

With a slight tremor and a half-articulated protest she resigned herself to the inevitable.

Villiers felt his blood quicken as he clasped Myra more firmly and felt the warmth of her supple body against his and her breath for a moment fan his cheek, and then he strode hastily up the slightly sloping path which led to the house, calling out as he did so for Mrs. Evelegh. Myra's face was half-hidden in his arm, and even had it not been so, in the dusk it would have been unreadable, and

the heightened colour in her cheeks have escaped his notice.

"What is it?" called Eileen anxiously from the veranda, where she was sitting in a lounge-chair.

And then, as Villiers and his burden came within the range of the lamplight which streamed from the inner room out across the veranda and garden path, she rose hastily.

Villiers stumbled up the short flight of steep steps, and laid Myra in the chair from which Eileen had risen.

"It is really nothing, dear," exclaimed the injured girl rather faintly; "only something seemed to have struck me as we stood talking by the look-out."

Eileen turned questioningly to Villiers.

"I think," said the latter, "we had better see what has injured your sister, Mrs. Evelegh. If Miss Helmont will just sit on the edge of the chair perhaps you could see."

As the girl moved into this position the colour which had crept back into her face on finding herself in Villiers' arms left it once more, and she closed her lips so as to keep back an exclamation of pain.

Eileen knelt down on the floor, and anxiously began to feel in the folds of her sister's skirt. Almost immediately her fingers touched a slender shaft of bamboo, and in doing so drew from Myra a sharp cry of pain.

Pulling the dress gently back Eileen disclosed an object, to the visible end of which was attached a

piece of folded paper serving as a 'feather.' It was somewhat similar to those arrow-like sticks that are seen on every hand in the rice-fields sticking up above the level of the waving green plants, attached to which is the paper 'feather' whereon is written the Shinto charm, or *orfuda*, supposed to preserve the crop from birds and other depredators.

It was at once apparent that Myra had been wounded by an arrow, by accident or intention, and when for a moment Eileen again touched the shaft the girl winced.

"Will you mind summoning Mishima?" said the former, glancing at Villiers. "Tell her to bring a bowl of warm water, a sponge, and some of the soft rag I keep in the medicine-cupboard."

By the time Villiers returned Eileen had succeeded in pulling out the roughly made arrow, which, easily piercing the thin fabric of her sister's dress, had then transfixed her left leg at the back and towards the outside. Although the wound was bleeding freely, it was not at all dangerous provided the arrow was not poisoned, and of the possibility of this Eileen, of course, did not breathe a word. On Mishima's advent with the water and bandages and Villiers' return, the wound was carefully bathed and bound up, and Myra made comfortable on the lounge-chair, as she absolutely refused to go to her own room until Evelegh's return.

Then, and not till then, Villiers took up the slender shaft to examine it closely. It was not barbed at its tip, which was merely shod with a sharply pointed bronze ferrule, and Villiers speedily satisfied himself

that it was an ordinary archery arrow such as was in common use, and that the probabilities of its being poisoned were small. Then, in examining the 'feather,' he discovered that the paper of which it had been made was written upon. When he had detached it and smoothed it out, the wording was plainly visible.

Asking Eileen to excuse him, he stepped inside so that he might see the rather roughly penned words the more easily.

The message was—robbed of circumlocution—approximately as follows:

"Know, O Senkyōshi San, that this is not the arrow of an enemy, but the warning of a friend. There is no poison in such, neither at the tip nor in the sending. But let it prove how easily mischief and even death may arise from the unguarded bravery and indifference of those against whom an enemy plots. Let it be a warning, O Senkyōshi San. There are many who love not thee nor the Jaso kyō, though thy other work and that of O Ku Sama is such as to touch the hearts of the poor and the sick ones. Take warning. Be ever watchful.—From one who has knowledge."

As Villiers was slowly spelling out the last few words—the ideographs were hastily written—he heard Evelegh's footsteps coming up the garden path, and his exclamation of surprise as he reached the veranda steps and saw Myra, and the basin, towels, and bandages, which latter things Mishima was just clearing away.

"Whatever is the matter, Eileen?" he exclaimed

anxiously. "Has there been an accident, or what has happened?"

Then Villiers came out on to the veranda and explained briefly what had occurred, and handed his friend the arrow's message.

"I am really all right, Chris," said Myra, laughing and making light of the occurrence for Eileen's sake, "though I don't quite see why I should be turned into a target for bow-and-arrow practice. It startled me, and Mr. Villiers insisted upon carrying me here, although perhaps I could have hopped along, and then I should not have frightened poor Eileen so much. I'm awfully sorry I was so stupid."

"It was impossible for you to have walked, Miss Helmont," broke in Villiers defensively. "With that arrow sticking into you, the consequences of the drag of your skirts against the shaft and the play of the thing in the wound might have been very serious."

"Of course, of course," chimed in Evelegh, seating himself on the foot of the lounge and affectionately taking one of Myra's hands in his. "Let me read this, and then we will see what is best to be done. Bed for you, my dear, for one thing, I should think."

When Evelegh, with a grave face, had read through the missive twice slowly, he folded it up and placed it carefully in his pocket-book. Then, with a smile, he turned to Eileen and Myra and said: "It is not of much consequence, I think; but the writer has a strange method of conveying his opinions. And it is quite clear to me, and also doubtless to you, Villiers," he continued, glancing upwards to his friend, who

nodded assent, "that the fact of the arrow hitting Myra, or any one else, for the matter of that, was a pure accident."

"Quite so, but none the less unfortunate," replied Villiers. "We were just in the middle of a most interesting discussion. Miss Helmont had invited herself" (Myra laughed a protest) "to see my tea plantation, and I had been telling her how welcome she would be. Now I am afraid, for a few days at least, the visit must be postponed. But every day now will make the country-side more picturesque, and if she comes by the upper road she will pass through the cherry wood and amidst a perfect paradise of sylvan beauty."

"I'm afraid that rest will be the only thing for some days to come," replied Evelegh. "And now I, as a doctor and not as Chris, Myra, suggest bed."

To tell the truth the girl was not anxious to protest. She had put a brave face upon the wound she had received, but the latter was nevertheless so painful that it was only by an effort that she was able to prevent the others seeing what she suffered.

"Very well, I'll second the proposition," she exclaimed, smiling rather feebly, for to move intensified her discomfort. "Good night."

Before she vanished into the inner room, leaning upon Eileen's arm, she gave Villiers her hand and said:

"I'm afraid I have been poor company after all to-night, but I will try to redeem my character next time. I shall look forward to seeing the plantation and your house, though it won't be yet.

And I shall also anticipate with pleasure the visit to Kambara's wonderful garden and the meeting with his charming daughter."

There was a strange inflection, almost approaching that of guarded hostility, in the last sentence; but neither of the men seemed to notice it, although Eileen's finer perception enabled her to do so. She glanced narrowly at her sister's face, and a faint smile flickered about the corners of her finely cut mouth.

"Good night, Miss Helmont," replied Villiers. "I have enjoyed our chat immensely; it is a treat one doesn't often get. I hope you will rest well, and be all right again in a day or two."

When the two women had disappeared into the house Evelegh pushed in the extension of the wicker lounge-chair, sat down, and slowly taking out his pocket-book, unfolded the strip of paper.

"You have read it?" he asked Villiers.

"Yes."

"The circumstance that my sister-in-law was hit was accidental," said Evelegh; "but the fact that any one should have taken this means to warn one is significant."

"It is not a very comfortable condition of things," said Villiers slowly; "though, of course, it is very unlikely that anything save tacit opposition and the policy of 'pin-pricks' will result. But all the same you should be on your guard, and perhaps it might be as well for old Kosojico to be about the garden when either your wife or Miss Helmont is there alone. Anyway, I hope, old fellow, you'll let me sleep here

to-night. I can shake down anywhere, and one great advantage of life out here is that one always sleeps on the floor, and so sees no particular hardship in it. I should like, too, to know how she is in the morning. I've no fear but the wound is clean enough, but all the same it was a great shock. I thought she would have fallen."

"I shall be glad for you to stay, and so will Eileen," replied Evelegh.

And then the speaker said quietly:

"Myra mentioned Kusatsu. Had you been talking of her?"

Villiers flushed a little, and paused ere he answered.

"She was just mentioned," he said at length, "in connection with old Kambara and his garden. Little more was said."

"Then Myra has no suspicion of—the actual state of the case?"

"No, certainly not, so far as anything I may have said," was the reply. "I saw no necessity to enlighten her if you and your wife had not done so."

"No, quite so," rejoined Evelegh, smiling at his companion's rather flushed face. "But don't forget, old chap, that Myra is only a girl. A sensible, good one; but still a girl, and therefore capable of misunderstanding many things which one might deem obvious enough. And not the least matters connected with the heart rather than the intellect."

"I don't think you need have any misapprehension, my dear fellow," was the reply. "You can trust me."

"Yes, fully, I know. But don't forget the ex-

ceptional circumstances in which you and she are placed. That is all."

Eileen's return, rather troubled and tired, turned the conversation into another channel.

As she sat on the matting at her husband's feet, with her head leaning against his knee, she was wondering whether the events of the night would have any material effect upon the fate of the two who had so suddenly been thrown together in a common destiny and danger. Myra had been strangely silent whilst undressing, more so than her wound would account for, and had scarcely mentioned Villiers' name. Almost all her remarks and questionings had related to little Kusatsu. And to the older woman who had loved and wedded the circumstance was significant.

CHAPTER X

THE SERVICE AT THE DENDŌ KWAN

MORE than a week elapsed ere Myra Helmont was sufficiently recovered from the shock and her wound to allow her to walk about as usual. And although both Evelegh and Villiers had put their heads together, and had instituted unobtrusive inquiries regarding the unknown author of the message which had had such unpleasant consequences for Myra, they had, as they fully expected, failed to discover anything definite.

During the days of enforced idleness when she was compelled to pass the greater part of her time on the lounge-chair beneath the veranda, either reading, looking at the garden, or chatting with her sister or Evelegh when they could spare time from their many duties, Myra had ample opportunity of thinking upon the subject of Villiers and her feelings towards him. She remembered, with a smile, the phrase of a certain writer which stated that 'Women may think they love many men, and yet only love one.' A good many men, too, had come within what a cynic has called 'the danger zone' of her life. And yet, until she and Villiers had met, the occasional stirring of

the deepest of all emotions in her heart had been transient and even evanescent.

There are some women, and Myra was of this category, into whose lives love comes with the suddenness of a consuming fire, which bursts into flame ere its presence is even suspected. There are others where love is of gradual and almost imperceptible growth, and sometimes—wrongly we think—it is claimed that for these only is love an enduring passion. A Southern writer has averred that women are either by nature all fire or ice, and that those who come between are not women, or at least not inspiring. Who really knows?

Long before Myra had completely recovered from her wound Eileen recognised that the scheme she honestly believed to be for the salvation of Villiers would, so far as her sister's feelings for him were concerned, be easy of accomplishment; but the man formed that unknown quantity which has often puzzled many good-intentioned match-makers. There was something, which Evelegh himself called honourable, and Eileen referred to as quixotic, in Villiers' nature which threatened to stultify the best laid schemes of even so discreet and clever a woman as Eileen Evelegh. Any idea, too, that she would be inflicting an injury upon little Kusatsu San by her attempt to detach Villiers' affections from the little Japanese did not cross her mind. When Evelegh himself vaguely suggested it, the idea took no hold either upon her feelings or imagination. This circumstance was but a phase of the inbred indifference, if not actual hostility, with which the Western woman usually

regards the rights and opinions of the Eastern. Good woman as Eileen was, the thought that Kusatsu's claim upon Villiers, who had professed his love for her, was valid, or that the promise made by a man of a white race to the woman of a 'coloured' one was sacred, did not present itself to her mind, nor cry as a problem for solution. And so Villiers was a more than ever welcome guest at the Mission House.

As for Villiers himself, man-like, he was content in matters of the heart to drift. There was no formulated thought of treachery to little Kusatsu San in his mind. Indeed, when he saw her, which somehow or other was a trifle less frequently than before Myra Helmont came to Kin-shiu, he was tender as ever, so that she herself, knowing nothing as yet of the arrival of O Ku Sama's sister, was happy enough, and untroubled in her tender and even quaint worshipping love for O Kashira San (the Honourable Overseer) of the Tea Plantation of the Seven Waterfalls. Myra herself would not easily have understood a love so humble and so self-abnegatory.

On the first evening that the latter was able to walk without assistance, it happened that both Eileen and Evelegh were obliged to attend a class at the Dendō Kwan in the town. Since the events of the last few weeks Evelegh had been more than usually punctilious in the attendance of both his wife and himself at all meetings at which Eileen could be reasonably expected to be present. It was characteristic of the man that nothing should deter him from a due performance of duties in the face of difficulties and

discouragement, even though feeling the latter acutely.

When Myra had pleaded for her sister's company he had merely said :

"Eileen must do as she likes, my dear ; but do not seek to over-persuade her from the performance of a duty which may have effects beyond what we may even anticipate or know."

When they reached the Dendō kwan it was to find old and faithful Mi-Kama awaiting them at the gate. Although his face brightened with pleasure when he caught sight of his beloved Senkyōshi, it became serious again as he walked with them up the little path which led through the front courtyard to the main door.

"Too muchee peoples here to-night," he said quietly, as Evelegh pushed open the door and stood aside for Eileen to enter. "Too muchee peoples for good." And as he repeated the words he nodded his head solemnly, and glanced apprehensively at Eileen and Evelegh.

"Why, O Mi-Kama," exclaimed the former, just as she was about to pass in ; "you are indeed strange to-night. Can there be too many gathered together to hear the Jaso kyō and the teaching of the *Seisho* which you yourself love ? "

"Yes, even so," replied O Mi-Kama sadly, shaking his head ; "for not all the people within the Dendō kwan to-night are there for the love of the Jaso kyō or of my Senkyōshi San."

"Hush ! O Mi-Kama," Evelegh exclaimed in gentle reproof. "Who can say what they may have come

for, or what they may not hear to touch their hearts and incline them to the better things of this life and the certain hope of the life to come?"

But though his words were such as to silence old Mi-Kama, and in a measure to reassure Eileen, as they entered the little building that impalpable sense of hostility which sensitive natures can always feel in the presence of an assembly which they are about to address, or of which they are about to form units, struck Evelegh sharply, and Eileen only less so because of her faith and confidence in him.

The Dendō kwan was fuller than Evelegh had ever seen it since the first few services following his coming to Kin-shiu, when curiosity had drawn together many who, as soon as the latter was sated, had discontinued coming.

To this regular weekly Bible reading and address given by Evelegh, on this occasion had come, not only the few faithful ones who by their lives were living evidences of the success of his ministrations and the power of the Christianity which he taught, the few who came with fair regularity out of personal regard for the Senkyōshi or O Ku Sama, or both, or because they thought that medicine when sick, the teaching of English to their children, and other material benefits were dependent upon an occasional attendance at the Sunday services and week evening class, but also a considerable number of those who were known to be hostile to the Jaso kyō, or were entirely strangers to both Evelegh and his wife.

The congregation were seated upon the floor, and they saluted Evelegh in native fashion by bowing

and touching, or almost touching, the spotless white rice-matting with their foreheads as he entered. Even the hostile section, which included his discharged servant, the woman Mitiki Kitsune, did so, and thus for a moment escaped recognition, although, as soon as Evelegh came out from the little vestry, whence he had retired to put on his surplice, and took his stand at the carved wooden lectern, his keen eyes at once singled her out, and also a man known to be hand in glove with Yumoto Kameya, the proprietor of the notorious 'Golden Kitten' tea-house.

Although Evelegh knew that their presence boded no good, and for a moment, as his eyes rested upon their upturned faces, he felt a sense of anxiety regarding Eileen, lest she should be involved either in positive danger, or, failing that, in some scene of a distressing character, neither Mitiki nor her companion could have detected in the hated Senkyōshi's face any trace of fear, alarm, or even recognition.

In tones which were only slightly halting from speaking in a foreign and not as yet perfectly familiar tongue, Evelegh gave out the hymn and read the first verse amid a rustling of turned pages, softer, and more like the fluttering of birds' wings, than the sharper sound caused by the stiffer leaves of Western hymn-books.

"O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home."

As the first notes of the American organ played by

Eileen sounded the congregation rose, in accordance with the custom Evelegh had with some slight difficulty succeeded in introducing. His predecessor had permitted the hymns to be sung by his flock whilst seated. There were few good voices amongst those assembled. Indeed, the Japanese, regarded from a Western standpoint, are not a musical race, the native *Yako*, or method of singing, being unmelodious and even distressing in its harshness and general tunelessness. Eileen herself was possessed of a fine, full contralto, and Evelegh a more than averagely good tenor; but amid so much dissonance as generally marked the native efforts at hymn-singing both were drowned. Eileen, in fact, had for some time past ceased to sing through the whole of the hymns, as she found it put a useless strain upon her throat, which had caused her during the first few months after she came to Kin-shiu some amount of trouble.

Villiers, who occasionally came to the service on Sunday, used to tell his friend Evelegh that if he would not have singing his, Villiers', attendance average would be much better. "I am not really musical," he had said on more than one occasion, "but I cannot stand the Japanese interpretation of well-known hymns, with the true tunes of which I am familiar. Singing, you call it, Evelegh?" he added, with his fingers in his ears. "Great Scot, man! I think it must be like the vocal efforts of banshees, though it's true I've never heard the latter weird being's performances."

Evelegh had only smiled. It was a trying experience for him and for Eileen, but some of his flock liked the singing and did their best. And there could

be no question of dropping this part of the services' even to ensure the promised more regular attendance of Villiers.

On this particular evening the singing went worse than usual. It was difficult to say why. As the last notes of the organ died away to a long-drawn-out and shrill accompaniment of native voices singing, as Eileen once described it, 'in disunison,' Evelegh, as he turned over the pages of the Bible to find the lesson, wondered whether the impression of unrest which obsessed him was real, or but the effect of imagination induced by the presence of Mitiki Kitsune and her companion.

Even during the prayers which succeeded the reading of the portion of the Psalm, which he had selected as being specially appropriate to the circumstance of the presence of those who were known to deride the 'foreign religion' and were hostile to him personally, the subtle spirit of unrest which is capable of dominating even strong natures at times seemed to envelop him. It was only when he was delivering the short address, one of a series upon 'the Christian Virtues' which happened to be upon Courage, that he lost himself in his subject and the message and warning he strove to convey to his hearers.

To some his words were evidently 'winged' ones; by others but half-understood; and to yet others but the vain babblings of a 'foreign dog,' whose teaching (so said the priests of the Temple, and they in their ancient wisdom should surely know) was likely to be subversive of law and the ancient order to which the

common folk tenaciously clung. He watched the faces of Mitiki Kitsune and her companion Hide Kayama narrowly as he set forth the guiding principles of a Christian life inspired by the highest form of courage. But from the two yellow, impassive faces he gained no idea of what was passing in the minds behind their wrinkled foreheads, although once or twice, when his glance met theirs, there was a glint of malevolent fire in the depths of the small black eyes of both. In the faces of old Mi-Kama; his wife, Itsune; Sekio, his own cook; Akechi, the telegraph clerk; and a few others, there shone a transfiguring radiance as they listened to his words, which told him how complete and sincere was their acceptance of and belief in the saving grace of the Jaso kyō he tried to preach.

On the faces of others—and these were perhaps the most interesting to watch—Evelegh's experienced eye could note the subtle changes which his presentation of certain facts and illustrations wrought upon their minds. It is to these, less than to the converted and to the obdurate, naturally a preacher often addresses himself.

There had been many of his college and other friends who, when they heard that he was going out to Japan and had accepted the Mission Station at Kin-shiu, asserted that Evelegh would be wasted there. He was an unusually good and arresting preacher, and his personality had soon gained for him great influence in the little Buckinghamshire village, the living of which he had been given by a distant cousin. "A potential bishop destined for an

obscure Mission Station" had been the verdict of the *Church Times*, whose editor had once heard Evelegh preach a college chapel sermon at Oxford. But Evelegh had set his face Eastward in the belief that he could accomplish much for the cause which had possessed his imagination and kindled within him a missionary zeal.

And now, as he drew his remarks to a close, with the evening shadows growing thick in the little Mission Hall, so that the faces of his audience seemed to recede from him, and appear indistinct in the fading light becoming blurred in outline and almost fantastic, he was suddenly possessed by the thought of how little his best endeavours, his constant prayer and thought had yet accomplished. He ceased speaking at last so suddenly that his listeners for the moment scarcely realised that he had finished his discourse. As Eileen was playing the tune to 'Now thank we all our God a feeling of depression such as seldom assailed him, and one of brooding calamity, seemed suddenly to take possession of his heart. And it was still present with him as Eileen and he made their way up the hill-side after they had seen the members of their congregation slowly file out from the Mission Hall and disperse in various directions.

Eileen's own thoughts were also sad ones as she climbed the steeply ascending homeward road between the cherry-trees and bamboo fences in the soft blue twilight of that spring night. Her husband's words that evening, although she could not follow all the intricacies of the Japanese tongue, had seemed to her so arresting, so persuasive, and so instinct with all

that was best and of good report, that she wondered sadly at the small apparent results of the work and prayer he gave. Perhaps had he remained in England he would have made hundreds of people think and ultimately decide for Christ against the World and its temptations, whereas here, in far-off Kin-shiu, converts could be counted scarcely by twos and threes. Perhaps—but she hesitated even to give form to a thought of so personal and worldly a nature.

They spoke little as they bent their steps upward, far less than was their usual wont, for their lives were so intimately interwoven, as regards interests and aspirations and love of their mission, that silence was seldom between them. At length Evelegh said slowly :

" Sometimes, dear, I feel that I am a failure. And to fail in the work of Christ is to fail indeed. I give of my best, and yet those who come to listen, save for a few exceptions, remain unconvinced, unmoved, by the greatest story of the greatest sacrifice and love that the world has ever known. If it were not for the faithful few, for the handful of waverers who may perhaps in full time give in their allegiance to the great Captain of Souls, I should feel it my duty to say, at whatever cost and distress of mind, that I am unfitted for the work ; so that I in my feebleness—though unchanged and not wavering in my personal faith and trust in Him—might be set a task in the corner of the vineyard which is less stony and less arid than this would seem to be."

Evelegh spoke dejectedly, and for a moment Eileen—whose thoughts had been travelling along

similar lines, with this difference, that no question of her husband's personal failure had entered her mind, but rather a deep and tender sympathy for him in his difficulties and a loving recognition of them and the disappointments of his labour—did not reply.

Through her mind was passing, with lightning rapidity, all that might come of an abandonment of so unpromising, so disheartening a task. It meant for her, perhaps, a return to the land she loved, to dear ones and to familiar faces, comparative luxury instead of laborious toil for both of them; fame for the man she loved in place of obscurity, the blessings of peaceful work—it would never be slothful ease—as against the menace of suspected and unknown dangers. And yet—— Suddenly the concluding words of the saintly Bishop of the South Pacific's valedictory sermon to Evelegh and his three fellow-missionaries, ere they left England for their separate and widely scattered fields of labour, came back to her. "For this Christ, Who loved the world with an undying love transcending anything that human mind can conceive, it is surely well to labour, and, aye, even to die. To tell those who sit in darkness of the supreme sacrifice of the Eternal Father's love is surely a task so sweet, so compelling, that the scars of service and of disappointment are made but honourable wounds received in the service of the great Lord and Master of us all. Let us recognise that no gem in the most glorious and priceless crown of earthly monarch can compare with that adorning the heavenly crown which will be given to

the true servants of Christ representing a soul won from darkness, whether it be tabernacled in a human being whose skin is dark or light. Indeed, the winning of such is of infinite more honour than the gaining of an earthly victory by which the destinies of an empire may be decided. Nay, I would rather present one soul at the gate of the Heavenly City as my poor claim to enter into the joy prepared for those who love God than possess all the treasures that world-conquest from time immemorial has brought to the sons of men."

As the impressive scene re-pictured itself to her mind she slipped her arm through that of her husband, and looking up at him with eyes shining with love and deep and fervent trust, she said :

" You are not a failure, Chris dear. No one could listen to you to-night and have come to that conclusion. Remember what the Bishop's parting words were to us. Some success is so hardly won that the advance seems almost imperceptible, that is all. I know how dispiriting the work is at times, not because of weakness, but because you so earnestly desire to lead every one of the poor blind souls who come to you into the way of Truth which leads to the Father's Kingdom. But Chris, dear, He knows best. He knows all this, and in His good time He will bring things to pass. Remember those who have come within the fold, and those who are evidently turning their footsteps in the right way; not those who as yet seem hard to touch, and callous to the teaching of the Master."

Evelegh pressed her hand which rested on his arm

with one of his strong ones, and across his face came a look of less distress of mind.

"You are right, Eileen," he said slowly and softly after a pause, "as you often are. Sometimes I think the spirit within you is of finer gold than mine can ever be, the trust more deep and hopeful. There is but one solution to all my difficulties—and, thank God, I know how to find it—trust in Him, in His power and infinite goodness, and to continue to preach the Gospel to all men. There is truly always a light shining in the darkness for those who love God."

By the time they reached their own wicket-gate leading into the garden, and by a narrow path of red, beaten earth approached the house itself, both had for the time at least thrown off the feeling of depression which the unresponsiveness of the greater part of those who attended the services had induced. Although Evelegh was unable entirely to dismiss his anxiety regarding the work, his face was almost untroubled when he greeted Myra and Villiers, both of whom were discovered sitting chatting together in the dusk on the veranda. And in reply to the latter's cheery inquiry, "Had a good meeting?" he replied, "Better as regards numbers than usual, I think."

Eileen vanished to order supper.

"And what have you two been talking about?" asked Evelegh as he seated himself in a chair, after having deposited his books in his study and divested himself of his clerical coat for a loose-fitting tweed jacket.

"It is difficult to say," replied Villiers, with a laugh, as Myra made no attempt to answer her brother-in-

law's query. "Mainly, I think, about tea and flowers. A little about Allenson's marriage with Ora San, which Miss Helmont cannot, naturally perhaps, understand," continued the speaker, with a slight inflexion of embarrassment in the tones of his voice. "But one thing we have arranged is that, if you and Mrs. Evelegh are willing to bring her, Miss Helmont is going to honour my shanty and the plantation with a visit to-morrow afternoon, and try some of the very best tea that Japan has produced. She wants, also, to see old Kano's garden *en route*——"

"And Kusatsu San," interrupted Myra, with some eagerness, which did not escape Evelegh's notice.

"And O Kusatsu San," slowly agreed Villiers, "who will be delighted, I am sure, to show Miss Helmont her floral treasures."

"I have been trying to persuade Mr. Villiers, Chris," said Myra, "to give himself a half-holiday and meet us at Kambara Kano's, so that he may act as guide and interpreter. But he won't. He says he is too busy, and must get tea ready for us; which, of course," continued the girl, "is all nonsense, as he cannot be so terribly hard-worked as all that, and Eileen and I would see to the tea for him on our arrival."

Myra spoke with well-simulated annoyance, which brought a series of excuses from Villiers.

Evelegh said nothing beyond:

"I am sure Villiers is getting busy, Myra; it is just the season. And, really, he has been very good to spare you and us so much of his time during the last week or so since your accident."

"Of course he has," agreed Myra, with a smile that tempted Villiers more than she knew to do as she wished, though it should bring about a meeting and even a crisis which he was anxious as long as possible to avoid; "but all the same, I have been so spoiled by you all that I am getting what old Mrs. Glover mystified me as a child by calling 'exigent.'"

Evelegh laughed. He quite knew why Villiers pleaded business, to avoid being present when Kusatsu San and Myra met.

Sometimes he thought it would have been wiser to have acquainted the latter with the fact of Villiers' entanglement, but whenever he proposed to do this Eileen entreated him not to, saying that Myra would know soon enough. He was not quite satisfied; but he was sincerely attached to Villiers, and indeed liked him so well that he hesitated to do anything which would depreciate him in Myra's eyes, and possibly cause him in consequence to discontinue his visits whilst she remained at the Mission House. The troublous and disturbing events which had recently occurred, and the feeling of unrest and apprehension which these had induced, caused both him and Eileen to turn to Villiers for counsel and help, which he felt they could just now ill afford to lose.

Therefore he said:

"I think you must put up with me for an interpreter at old Kambara's. It is a good idea that we should go and see his garden, and then go on to Villiers for tea. You can have a *kago* or a

mountain pony, whichever you like. I advise the former; the ponies are difficult little beasts for a European to manage. Eileen and I can easily walk."

"That is arranged, then," said Villiers, rising. "I must be off home now, for there is no moon, and I know Okitē, the foreman of the drying-sheds, has come into the town and will be going back about nine, and I shall be glad of his lantern and company through the wood, which is the shortest cut, though of Cimmerian darkness on moonless nights. Besides," continued the speaker, laughing, "I must get some of the 'honourable foreign biscuits' from Okitē's uncle, who is the only one who deals in such things, and in foreign provisions, for tea to-morrow."

"Well, if you must go, I won't seek to detain you, old fellow," said Evelegh, rising; "but wait till I get you a cigar to keep you company till you tumble across the excellent Okitē."

When he had lit the cigar Villiers took his leave, and, with a wave of his hand ere he passed out of the light which streamed from the house through the open *shoji*, disappeared down the garden path.

When he had gone Myra sat pensive and silent for some minutes, and then she said, as the sound of his footsteps on the hard-beaten road died away: "I think Mr. Villiers is very nice; quite as nice as you and Eileen have always insisted he is. I am looking forward to to-morrow, for I have never seen a tea plantation."

"Yes," agreed Evelegh rather guardedly, "he's a real good sort at heart, is Villiers." Then earnestly, "But

I don't think I should like him too much if I were you, Myra."

Even in the shadow where she sat the girl feared Evelegh would notice the flood of colour which his warning called to her cheek, not merely in protest. She said hastily:

"Don't be silly, Chris. You men are all alike. You don't think a girl can call one of your sex nice without the risk of falling in love with him."

And then, as she paused, Evelegh simply said, "Can they?"

"Of course," exclaimed Myra. "Don't you trouble. I like him and he *is* nice, but I don't want to marry him."

"Don't you? That's a good thing for him," laughed Evelegh.

And then Eileen's voice came from the house, "Aren't you two ever coming?"

And the discussion was brought to a sudden end.

CHAPTER XI

THE MEETING OF MYRA AND KUSATSU SAN

NEXT morning broke fine and warm. The mists, which often in the days of early summer hang over the Kin-shiu valley, dissolved rather than rolled away on the hill-sides and down the valley to the west.

Myra had awakened early. The dwellers of the Mission House slept soundly as a rule, and the fresh, clean air of the mountain-side caused them to awake refreshed, and their slumbers toward early morning to be light from the enjoyment of hours of complete rest and forgetfulness. Nothing more romantic than Sekio, the cook's, clattering of pans and dishes had aroused Myra that morning, and ere rising she lay awake some time on her mattress-like bed on the floor musing about many things in general, and one thing in particular—Villiers. She was almost angry with herself for doing this. It seemed rather childish—but, did she only know it, so long as there are two sexes, and girls are normally constituted, this particular form of childishness (if so it be) will continue on favourable occasions to demonstrate itself—and had not Chris, she thought, warned her

only the night before not to think too much about his friend. But perhaps it was Evelegh's veiled suggestions that there was some good reason why she should not do so which caused Myra all the more to concern herself with idle speculations concerning Villiers.

Why should Chris have said, "I don't think I should like him too much if I were you, Myra?" It was chiefly this problem with which she concerned herself as she lay and watched the sunbeams filtering through a chink in the *shoji*. Then, as the problem would not be solved, she got up, and slipping a silken *kimono*, which had been a present from Eileen and Evelegh, over her night-dress and her feet into a pair of rice-straw sandals, she pushed back the *shoji* gently and went out on to the veranda. There was just sufficient haze remaining in the air to give a more than usually mysterious beauty to the landscape and summits of the hills—the garden itself looking as though the beautiful gay-hued flowers were bathed in a flood of liquid gold; the wonderful golden hue of a Japanese summer morning.

It was barely five o'clock, but already the blue smoke from the wood fires of the houses in the town was rising up in the still air, and mingling with the rapidly dissolving mists of the mountain-side.

She had been standing on the veranda some ten minutes, looking out into the beautiful garden, and watching the distant peaks emerge from the environing mists, when her attention was suddenly called to little Mishima, who came round the corner of the house and, with a furtive glance at the hill-side,

made her way rapidly down the path to a point where another led into the tiny wood at the northern side of the garden—a patch of hill-side, overgrown by flowering azalea bushes, and shaded by feathery birches, beeches, and maples. Although it was not unusually early for the servants of the household to be about, there was something in Mishima's manner and the evident desire she exhibited not to be seen which aroused Myra's curiosity and even suspicion. Myra herself had evidently not been observed by the little maid. Indeed, she was almost completely sheltered by the end of the veranda, which was shut in by outside shutters running along it, and also partially hidden by a creeper which drooped from the roof.

Peeping through this natural screen of foliage, Myra was able to observe Mishima, not only as she went down the garden path, but also when she approached the rocky side of the tea-garden where the wood commenced. For a moment or two the tiny figure in its grey-blue *kimono* was hidden at a turn of the path, and then was visible for a few yards ere it was once more lost. On the hill-side stood one particularly large maple-tree, and suddenly, just as Mishima disappeared for the second time, a figure rose up, clad in the slaty-blue cotton coat of the Japanese peasant, alongside the trunk of the maple.

Something seemed to prompt Myra to withdraw farther behind the shutters, and only peep forth through a thick portion of the creeper. She judged that she was now completely hidden from the man upon the hill-side, and also from Mishima, should

the latter glance back at the house on once more emerging into view.

A moment or two later the girl reappeared beneath the maple-tree, and after greeting the man, who had retreated behind the trunk until he was more than half hidden, entered into what was evidently serious conversation, and apparently even an earnest appeal. The man seemed to be threatening something, for his hand was several times raised as though in anger, and once, for a moment, Mishima retreated from him as though terrified. Then the two disappeared as though they had suddenly sunk into the earth, and Myra did not again catch sight of either until she saw the girl coming slowly back up the path.

Myra was determined that the latter should not see her, for she felt assured that there was some mystery attending this interview beneath the maple-tree with the man whose face, however, she had been too far off to recognise, even had she known him ; so she crept back into her room and commenced to dress.

All the time she was brushing out the masses of her long, black-brown hair, which fell in long tresses over her bare white shoulders, on which the golden sunshine glinted as she stood in front of the dressing-table Eileen had improvised for her special benefit out of a packing-case, and was gazing into the quaint, burnished steel mirror which stood upon it, she was puzzling over what she had seen, and seeking an explanation for Mishima's conduct. Myra's face whilst doing so was distinctly troubled, and its pensive cast was so unusual that she smiled at herself

instinctively in the glass, and murmured : " I wonder what Eileen and Chris would say if they saw me looking so solemn. I'm sure neither would recognise me. But then, dear old things, they know I am young and foolish, though perhaps not quite such a poor little butterfly as people think. I wonder if I ought to tell them about Mishima ? " adding, after a pause, " Perhaps, after all, it was only her 'young man,' if there are such things in Japan. And it would be rather mean to tell unless I'm sure there is something wrong."

Upon further consideration, Myra decided not to say anything unless something further arose to strengthen or confirm her suspicions. She was the more inclined to let the matter rest, knowing as she did that both her sister and Evelegh had for some time past been worried by the course of events, and she was unwilling, unless compelled to do so, to add to these anxieties.

She knew little or nothing of the self-control which is a part of the Japanese woman's very nature ; and so, when she met Mishima half an hour or so later, on entering the living room, and the latter greeted her without embarrassment, and with the usual illuminating smile, polite salutation, and inquiry after her honourable health, Myra had her suspicions lulled, and came to the conclusion that there was nothing in the meeting she had seen which necessitated mention of it to either Chris or Eileen.

Afterwards, as it proved, she was destined bitterly to regret her decision.

The morning passed without incident, and quite

early in the afternoon the party set off for old Kambara's garden. Evelegh and Eileen, who were good walkers, were on foot, Myra in a *kago*, or hammock, whose two sturdy bearers' copper-coloured backs, chests, legs, and arms were so elaborately tattooed as to make their lack of clothing, other than short drawers of blue cotton, scarcely noticeable. The huge red-and-blue dragon which sprawled across the back of the one in front of Myra, who supported the pole on his wide shoulders, on which a flying fish was most wonderfully tattoed, so fascinated her that for some minutes she had eyes for nothing else. The minuteness and delicacy of the drawing were so marvellous that it appeared as though the design was actually done in relief.

The road at first lay down the hill-side, as though the party were making for the town. But just as the houses of Kin-shiu, in some cases nestling against the tree-clad mountain-side, with their red-brown roofs almost embowered in foliage, were reached, the way branched off to the right, and, crossing a wooden bridge, began once more to climb upwards, skirting the town, and then, after a few hundred yards of stony path cut out of the solid rock, suddenly plunged into the beautiful wood of which Villiers had spoken.

Evelegh and his wife walked on either side of Myra's *kago* chatting gaily, and pointing out to her the different points of view as they ascended slowly. Here and there charming vistas of the town in the valley below them, and of distant mountain peaks, were disclosed through gaps in the trees.

For the time all thought of coming trouble, or of the complexities of their lives amid an unsympathetic and even hostile environment, seemed dismissed from their minds.

"My coolie's back is just too lovely for anything, Eileen," remarked Myra, using an idiom acquired from some American girl fellow-passengers on the voyage out; "but," with a little shudder, "how he must have suffered to have all that tattooed on him, and it must have been expensive. A young fellow who was on the boat coming out to Hong-Kong showed me his arm one day, and there was only a small figure upon it, and a tree or piece of creeper, and he told me a man in London had charged him £3 10*s.* for doing it."

"Probably," said Evelegh, "the whole of Itami's back, shoulders, chest, and arms were 'done' for less than half that sum, Myra. And as for suffering —well, he would have only a small portion of the design done at a time, and by exposure to the weather his skin is far less sensitive than that upon the arm of your mail-boat friend. I knew one of the *kago* boys in Yokohama whose tattooing took over six years in the doing. But then there were scarcely two square inches of his body, from his ankles to his neck, and from his wrists to his shoulders, left uncovered."

Then turning to Itami, Evelegh asked him how long his designs had taken in the doing. "More than a year and less than two," he explained; adding, "But O Senkyōshi San, it is but the beginning. Kuroki, the tattooer in Tukara machi, says

the rest will not be done till I am many years older. It is but little, indeed, that O Kuroki, clever though he is, can accomplish in the time I can spare."

"You see, Myra," said Evelegh, with a smile, "that you are really called upon to admire a work of art, embarrassing though the medium in which it is done may be——"

Myra laughed and said:

"Quite so. But what a pity it is that the 'medium,' as you call it, should be so perishable. It can only last as long as my coolie, and then all the trouble and skill that have been expended, and the beautiful work which is the result, are gone——"

"Not always," interrupted Evelegh, with a grim smile; "I remember in Yokohama taking up what I took at first to be a piece of very fine wood etching in a cedar frame. I was soon undeceived, as the old curiosity shop-keeper, to whom it belonged, pressed me to purchase it as a 'top side very fine curio,' hastening to explain that it was the work of Itami Yoshida (one of the most famous tattooers), and that the man whose skin it was had died from a healthy complaint! having, it transpired, been knocked on the head by a sack which had fallen on him from a granary hoist."

"How horrible!" exclaimed Myra, with a shudder. "But did you buy it?"

"No," replied Evelegh, laughing; "Eileen threatened that she would not live in the house if I did."

Hearing her name, Eileen, who had walked on a little ahead as the path narrowed, turned and waited

till her husband and the *kago* in which Myra was luxuriating came up.

"What is the scandal you two are talking about me?" she asked.

Then, when she learned the subject of conversation, she exclaimed:

"I call you simply horrible to talk about such things amid this beautiful wood, and with sunshine and life all around you."

"Perhaps it is," agreed Myra; "but you know, Eileen, ever since I was a child I have loved horrors, and used to delight in making your flesh creep o' nights in bed."

"Well, anyway," said her sister, "don't spoil our walk with a continuance of such horrors."

The way was indeed beautiful. Up on the hill-side, amid the birches and maples, a Siberian thrush was singing sweetly, its song echoed by another more distant; whilst now and again there was a monotonous accompaniment supplied by the tap-tap of a woodpecker. The slight breeze, too, which had risen since the party had set out, caused an undersong of leafy melody, and seemed to waft the perfume of flowers and pines along the narrow path.

Below them, as they climbed farther up the hill-side, ere the path commenced to descend into the open country, lay the fertile valley, dotted over with tiny villages and groups of houses, looking like playthings in the distance; whilst nearer at hand, and somewhat behind the wayfarers, was spread out Kin-shiu, over which hung a faint haze of wood-smoke and shimmering heat.

Myra was enraptured by the prospect as it broke upon her every now and again through openings in the underwood and trees. And when they at length came to a huge, out-standing rock, which afforded an uninterrupted view of the valley and the distant mountains to the south-west, she insisted upon getting out of the *kago* and going to the edge.

Sheer down below her lay the fringe of the town, with the river flowing placidly through it like a shimmering ribbon, and thence along the valley to the distant sea. On the bark of the trees near by Japanese lovers of Kin-shiu had cut ideographs, and from time to time had doubtless hung love poems upon the branches, as is their wont. But most interesting of all, to Myra, was the solitary little shrine which was set amid the wood near this beauteous spot—empty, as are all such shrines, of figures or paintings.

"How strange, and yet how really poetically beautiful," said Myra, as she peered into it, "is this idea of a shrine erected, not to contain an idol made by men's hands or the painted semblance of an image, but merely, as it were, to consecrate something beautiful in nature which is 'the handiwork of 'the (to them) unknown God.'"

"Yes," replied Evelegh; "and in Shintoism there is much more than mere Nature-worship. That is where Collins, my predecessor, went wrong. It is our duty as Christians to see what is good in another faith, and foster that good, whilst we endeavour to teach the religion of Christ as the final and truest embodiment of all Eternal faith and goodness.

Strangely enough, without most of the outward elements which are commonly looked for in a religion, Shintoism undoubtedly inculcates a high ideal of duty and patriotism, and has proved a wonderful character-builder. I have often felt," continued Evelegh, "that something may be made out of these elements—something which may aid us in the teaching of the Jaso kyō and in illustrating the life of the Master, which was one long performance of duty to His Heavenly Father, as well as obedience in early years to His earthly parents."

Myra listened to the speaker whilst she looked out over the wide prospect which spread in front and beneath her—a scene topical of the romantic beauty of the mountain districts of central Japan. The red-painted, solitary *torii*, beneath which they had passed a few hundred yards back along this narrow by-path, gave, she had known, a promise of beauty, but scarcely had she expected the exquisite loveliness of the view she had from the rocky platform upon which she stood.

At last she said:

"You always seem to me, Chris, concerned to see good in everything and everybody. I wish there were more like you in the world, and also in the Church. I am only a girl," she continued, as though apologetically, "but it appears to me that every religion, or branch of religious belief, must have elements of good in it, if one only looks for them. It is well, perhaps, for you that your work has been cast here, where to a large extent you have a free

hand and with no one so immediately over you that your endeavour to take some of what is best from the national faith is pronounced heresy or unorthodox."

Eileen, who stood behind Myra with her arm through her husband's, smiled. It was not often that such serious reflections fell from the lips of her sister, although she had always suspected Myra, as she herself had several times told Evelegh, to possess an undercurrent of serious thought and to be "capable of great things in an emergency."

After resting for a while to take in the panorama of mountain, wooded hill-side, and the fertile valley in which the quaintly irregular-shaped rice-fields lay like burnished steel mirrors, with here and there a suspicion of tender green upon their surfaces where the young shoots were planted, the party once more made its way back to the upper path, and half an hour later emerged from the wood on to the main Kin-shiu road, leading to the house of Kambara Kano.

The garden lay up on the hill-side above the red-brown road, which wound slowly upward on its way across the mountains. The approach to the house, which stood on a little plateau cut out of the hill, was through a creeper-enshrouded gateway of bamboo and along a path flagged with stone. Just within the gate stood Kusatsu, a dainty figure in her best silken *kimono* of a tint matching the clear blue of the sky above her, and with a wonderful representation of fleecy clouds and storks in flight embroidered upon it. Above her flower-like face, into

which a natural colour had crept beneath the olive-bronze hue of her skin, she had arranged her blue-black hair in the beautiful *joro-wage* fashion affected by young women and girls above the age of fifteen. She formed a delightful note of colour in the picture made by the charming garden, which stretched on either side of the path and extended beyond the iris ponds up the hill-side.

So pretty did she look that a sudden and instinctive feeling of jealousy possessed Myra. She knew of Villiers' friendship with Kambara and Kusatsu, and it seemed to her that mere friendship with so charming and beautiful a girl—even though she were a Japanese—would scarcely be possible. And if this were not possible, it might mean sorrow and distress of mind for her. Still, surely the bar of race must count for something? she thought. And yet, had she not heard from Eileen of Allenson's marriage, and from the Thurstons' less guarded accounts of other Anglo-Japanese alliances and their too often disastrous results? Surely Hubert Villiers would not make such a mistake. And yet!

Subtle hints, which Eileen could not help letting fall, concerning how she, Myra, might help Villiers out of any possible entanglement, came rushing back into her mind, and appeared more clearly to her than when her sister made the remarks. But almost ere she could think of these things Kusatsu was through the gateway, and bowing with polite humility before them.

The afternoon sunshine lit up her radiantly

youthful face softly, and glinted amid the strands of her glossy hair, and caught the gold threads in the wings of the flying storks on the back of her *kimono* as she bent forward.

"*Irasshaimashi! Oagari-nasai!*" (Welcome! Please come in!) exclaimed Kusatsu in a low, musical voice; adding, in delightfully broken English, "Honoured Senkyōshi, and great honourable English ladies, step in the poor garden of your most humble and contemptible servants."

The poor garden!

It was verily a garden of delight to Myra as its beauties were unfolded before her on passing through the gate.

Amid the rocks, which Kambara and his two assistants had, with such infinite trouble, delved, selected, and brought into position, were tiny trees, miniature waterfalls, and ponds, in the latter of which swam gold and silver fish, mouthing in the sunshine after gnats and water-flies, whilst brilliant green frogs sat upon the lotus leaves, and croaked ere plunging hastily into the water. All around azaleas were blooming, and irises commencing to burst into flower—white, yellow, dark blue, black-and-yellow, and green-white blossoms, looking in the distance like huge butterflies resting for a moment upon the green spikes of foliage—a belated cherry-tree or two giving a note of white and nacre pink to the stronger tints of the other flowers.

Soon Kambara himself appeared, a delightfully quaint old figure, full of garden lore and knowledge, which Evelegh had no difficulty in extracting. His

wisdom and curious plant-lore amused the fascinated Myra; but at the back of her mind all the while it was Kusatsu who was of paramount interest. She several times caught the latter regarding her narrowly, though furtively, as she was showing some flower to Eileen; and the impression grew in her mind that there was an intuitive, though indefinable, hostility between them, recognised by both. Myra in the same hour knew that she loved Villiers, and became assured that a like sentiment possessed the heart of the Japanese maiden, whose face was so inscrutable, though her eyes occasionally half-betrayed her.

It seemed impossible to Myra that there could be a serious rivalry. But Kusatsu was not only pretty; she was charming. Her manners were not those of a country gardener's daughter in England, but rather of some high-bred young lady of the same circle as that in which Myra herself moved. She had the gracious charm and captivating humility, which are among the sweetest attributes of womanhood, and confer a distinction upon their possessor.

And little Kusatsu?

She was in her heart afraid. To her this honourable English lady, with her distinguished air and beautiful, piquant face, who was so much above her in height, whose very garments and hat conferred upon her an aloof dignity, was a menace. The sister of the wife of the Senkyōshi San knew her Villiers San. But was it possible, she thought bitterly and apprehensively, that he should again look with much favour upon her simplicity, when a woman of his own

race, so beautiful and great, should have come into the circle of his life? And yet only the previous night this same Villiers San had held her in his strong arms, and taught her by no spoken words, but rather by an eloquent silence, what love meant, as she looked shyly into his eyes and felt his lips upon hers. Even as Kusatsu now remembered this, she felt that there was to be a struggle between her and the English girl, who stood beside her thus, talking quickly in a strange tongue of the beautiful flowers and garden of her father Kambara. Just as her ancestresses in far-off times fought for possession of lover or husband, so the primitive instinct in Kusatsu urged her to the struggle, whether it were fated to spell for her defeat or victory.

When the time arrived for Evelegh, Eileen, and Myra to leave—after partaking of the inevitable tea on the veranda—and go on to Villiers' bungalow, Kusatsu's polite and ceremonious farewell and her 'Sayonaro' from the wicket-gate were even more formal than her greeting had been. There was present an element of underlying hostility and distrust which even Evelegh noticed, although he said nothing until he was alone with his wife.

When his visitors had disappeared round the corner of the road, Kambara, who was standing at Kusatsu's side watching them, said thoughtfully in Japanese:

"The female honourable foreigner goes to see Villiers San. You, O Kusatsu, must watch lest they steal away your lover, who is so rich, and who can assist your poor, unworthy family to become rich like he is."

Kusatsu said nothing for a moment. Then she replied slowly, turning away so that her father should not see her face, in the eyes of which tears, about to fall, glistened:

"Perhaps you are right, O honourable parent. I must truly watch."

And without saying more she re-entered the garden.

Less than half an hour served to take Evelegh and his companions to Villiers' plantation. As soon as the little party came in sight of the bungalow Villiers himself could be seen coming up through the fields to where the road wound round the hill-side away from them, passing on to the neighbouring village of Tarami.

"Stop!" said Evelegh to the *kago*-bearers, who promptly plumped their burden down by the road-side.

Then leaving the coolies to follow them later, Evelegh, Eileen, and Myra entered the wicket-gate in the bamboo fence, which enclosed the plantation, and advanced to meet Villiers.

"So you've turned up at last," exclaimed the latter, as he neared them. "I had almost abandoned hope, and feared that the superior attractions of Kambara's beautiful garden had ensnared you. If you had been a man instead of a girl," he continued, addressing Myra directly, "I should have added also that of little Kusatsu herself."

A faint flush of deeper colour suffused Myra's cheeks, and for the fraction of a moment she did not reply. Then she said:

"I suppose by that, Mr. Villiers, you think a woman incapable of appreciating another girl's beauty? You are mistaken. I think O Kusatsu San quite lovely. She is by far the prettiest woman I have seen since I have arrived in Japan. I do not in the least wonder at your enthusiasm."

Myra spoke very deliberately, and Villiers was rather nonplussed. He had merely referred lightly to Kusatsu under, of course, the erroneous impression that he would succeed in throwing dust in Myra's eyes. Now he upbraided himself for his blunder.

"I don't quite understand what you mean," he said rather lamely. "But," he added, with a short laugh, "don't let us quarrel, it is too fine a day for that. Besides, I want you to see the plantation, Miss Helmont. I think you will be interested. We are actually picking some of the finest leaf to-day. We are more than a week earlier than last year."

To the passage of arms which had led up to the foregoing conversation, Evelegh and Eileen had listened with quiet amusement as they walked on ahead down the steeply sloping path. To the latter, Villiers' motive in referring to Kusatsu at all, and Myra's asperity, were perfectly obvious. She was a woman, and she had studied her husband closely. These two facts will give the key to most otherwise incomprehensible attitudes of mind in people of different sexes. The married woman who is an ignoramus on such points has no one save herself to blame; and we suspect she loses much of the salt, and perhaps some of the pepper, of life.

Myra was not yet capable of quick movement.

It was therefore but natural that she and Villiers should lag behind. Evelegh and Eileen had seen the plantation many times, and under all conditions, so they did not linger when Villiers stopped to explain the difference between old leaves and those that were then being picked by a score or more of women and girls, who regarded Myra curiously, although their nimble fingers did not for an instant cease to pick off the tender leaves—swiftly, but with such deftness that they were removed from the stem without bruising.

"This tea," explained Villiers, "is far more costly than you would imagine. I suppose," he went on, "that like other foreign ladies—and men, for the matter of that, who come here—they have not been many, 'tis true, but there have been some—you imagine that they would be worth a shilling or so a pound." Myra nodded assent. She had always understood that where a thing was grown or manufactured it must necessarily be cheap. "You may be surprised," Villiers continued, "when I tell you that I can get between 4 and 5 *yen* (say 8*s.* to 10*s.*) a pound; sometimes even more."

Myra opened her eyes. She remembered that very good tea—at least, so she thought—could be had for less than half-a-crown. And here, on the spot, it was costing 10*s.*

"But this," said Villiers, amused by her astonished look, "is what we call 'Golden Sunset Glory.' It is some of the finest tea grown in the province. You shall taste it when we get to my shanty."

By the time they had walked through the upper

plantation, and had been to the sorting-sheds, and the drying-sheds, and had watched the leaves curling over the charcoal braziers, Myra was more than half-repentant of her asperity. She made herself charming; and the contrast in her manner with the aloofness she had shown earlier in the afternoon to her companion was like that of sunshine after rain.

As for Villiers, for the time he refused to think. Kusatsu was driven to that 'back place' in his mind to which are relegated by some men the broken idols of passion, as well as the inconvenient memories of their lower selves.

The famous tea, brewed by one of the girls at work upon the plantation, Myra pronounced delicious; although when she saw the pale, brandy-coloured liquid poured out she anticipated but a 'wishy-washy' beverage, and wondered what some tea-drinking ladies at home would think of the concoction. The Huntley and Palmer's biscuits with which Villiers, as Evelegh and Eileen laughingly declared, regaled his guests 'regardless of expense,' were a pleasant change from a diet of sugared plums, mochi cakes, and raw fish!

At sundown the Mission House party set their faces homeward, well pleased with their afternoon's outing, and Villiers accompanied them.

As he walked along besides Myra's *kago* chatting gaily, the latter once more fell to speculating upon the basis of his friendship with Kusatsu, and wondering vaguely why the presence of this man—whom she had only known a few weeks—amongst all those she had ever met, should affect her so deeply.

The party, by Villiers' direction, followed the lower

road, which for a mile or two skirted the hill, and thus avoided passing Kambara's garden. Then just before Kin-shiu came in full view round the corner they took one of the narrow mountain tracks which climbed upward, and ultimately joined the road through the wood near by the solitary *torii* they had passed in the afternoon.

The crickets and grasshoppers were noising their long-drawn-out whistling song, ji-ji-ji-ji, in the undergrowth, and from amid the trees there came the plaintive cooing of the wild dove, and the sweet cry of the *uguisu* from the deeper shadowed parts of the wood. As the latter opened here and there, and vistas of the valley were seen now veiled in the blue twilight of a Japanese evening, the discordant notes of the frogs in the rice-fields and marshes near the river came to the wayfarers, drowning the gentler songsters and sweeter sounds of the now deeply enshadowed wood. Amid the mysterious beauty of the oncoming night both Villiers and Myra became silent, and Evelegh and Eileen ceased to talk in the undertone habitual to them when exchanging confidences or discussing domestic problems together.

Just as the party emerged from the trees and took its way across the slender wooden bridge spanning the ravine, from the town, now not far distant below them, where lights were coming out one by one like glow-worms, rose the sweet, weird cry of the *amma*,[1] calling, "*Amma kamishimo go kyakmon! Amma kamishimo go kyakmon!*"

[1] Blind woman, who earns her living by shampooing or massaging the sick and weary.

A sad, sweet, long-drawn-out, flute-like cry, followed by the shriller note of the whistle, which the singer sounds between her call to warn other pedestrians and *jinrikishas* of her approach.

To-night, though they had heard the sound many times before, its sadness seemed to Evelegh and his wife prophetic of misfortune. It was one of those strange, super-sensitive transmissions of ill to come, of which most of us some time or other have had experience.

CHAPTER XII

THE SILENT HOUSE

AS the party turned in at the gate, after paying and dismissing the *kago*-bearers, Eileen at once noticed that the house was in darkness. Indeed, in the blue gloom of the early summer night it was scarcely distinguishable against its background of dark trees. There seemed something sinister in the circumstance, but she said nothing until Evelegh himself remarked it.

"How queer," he exclaimed, "that Mishima has forgotten to light the lamps;" adding, after a pause, "Perhaps she and Sekio are at the back in the kitchen, or Rosamund is wakeful and Mishima is sitting with her."

"Perhaps so," said Eileen. But there was a note of apprehension in her voice.

Myra and Villiers were behind, coming slowly, and so Evelegh and Eileen reached the house alone. All the way up to the garden, to the more sensitive organisation of the woman the place had seemed peopled with phantoms and full of menace.

On reaching the veranda steps and hearing no

sound, Eileen called, "Mishima! Mishima! *Oide nasai.*"

Then she clapped her hands loudly to summon the little maid.

There was no response. No long, musical answer, "*Hai! Hai-i-i-i! tadaima*," sounded from within, accompanied as usual by the sound of *tabi*-clad feet hurriedly shoo-shoo-ing along the matting floor. Only silence.

Then Evelegh himself took up his wife's call for Mishima, just as Villiers and Myra reached them.

"Mishima! Mishima! Where are you? Come quickly."

Still no response.

Evelegh became seriously alarmed. He hastened up the veranda steps and pushed aside the *shoji*. He entered the room and struck a match, after which he found the lamp which always stood ready on a bracket just inside the apartment. By the time he had lighted it, Eileen, Myra, and Villiers had followed him.

The lamp threw fantastic shadows of their figures upon the paper walls, and in the death-like silence which pervaded the house each one half-feared to probe the mystery.

Rosamund's sleeping-place led out of the room occupied by Evelegh and Eileen. It was a tiny, almost cupboard-like place, the *karakimi* enclosing which were slid back at night so that the little girl should not be alone.

As Evelegh and the rest entered the sleeping-apartment they at once saw that Rosamund's tiny

bed had been prepared, the mattress-like *futon* was spread out on the floor, the top quilt was ready beside it. But the child was not there!

Eileen gave a cry of alarm.

It was the first sound she had uttered after her fruitless call for Mishima.

It was long past Rosamund's bedtime, and if her mother's instinct had not told her something serious must have happened, the fact that the child was not in bed, and the house was silent and apparently deserted, was enough.

Evelegh grasped his wife's arm firmly and said, with all the calmness he could summon, "Don't be frightened, my darling. Remember we and Rosamund are in the hands of God."

Then he listened for any answer to Eileen's cry, which in its intensity of distress had vibrated against the fragile *karakimi*, and must have pierced the walls of every room and reached the farthest recesses of the house.

No answer came.

Only some *nidzumi* were heard scuttling away under the floor, and one of the stray dogs of the town could be heard baying down the road.

After a moment or two spent in a thorough inspection of the room, all four made their way along the narrow passage which led to the servant's apartments. There was no one to be seen in the room in which, during the daytime, Otimi, the gardener, who left at sundown, Sekio, and Mishima were wont to spend any spare time they might have. All was silent and deserted.

Evelegh lit a lamp. It at all events did something to make the silent house less weird and terror-striking. Then he pushed aside the *karakimi* which separated this room from the kitchen, where Sekio prepared the wonderful dishes which so much amused and mystified Myra. At the first glance apparently nothing was amiss. Everything was in the perfect and spotless order which marks the well-kept Japanese kitchen. The preparations for the evening meal were evident. But as Evelegh's eyes swept swiftly round the apartment, in the none too brilliant light given by the cheap kerosene lamp he held in his hand, he suddenly saw, projecting slightly round the corner of an opening where the *shoji* had been pushed back, a dark object.

At almost the same moment Eileen caught sight of this, and gave a sharp, little cry.

"Remain here with Myra," exclaimed Evelegh; "don't be frightened, you will be perfectly safe." Then he turned to Villiers and said, "Come with me; we must see into this."

Both Myra and Eileen sank down on the floor in the corner of the room, for there were no chairs in Sekio's kitchen, and regarded, with terrified and half-averted gaze, the dark object which was slightly further disclosed, as the *shoji* had to be slid back to allow Evelegh and Villiers to pass out on to the veranda.

They clasped one another's hands and waited, with their breasts heaving and their hearts beating heavily—waited and wondered what the flickering light of the lamp which Evelegh held would reveal.

They saw the shadow of the latter stooping down, as it was thrown enormous and terrifying on the semi-translucent panels of the *shoji*. Then they heard Villiers give a short, sharp exclamation of horror or astonishment, followed immediately by the sound of a heavy body being turned over.

They held their breath and waited, trembling. Neither woman was a coward, but the coming home to the dark, silent, empty house and the thing that lay on the veranda outside had unnerved them. So they started nervously when Villiers stepped back into the room and said quickly, but quietly, "Don't be alarmed; it is Sekio. Where is some brandy, or *saké*?"

Eileen pulled herself together.

Now that there was something to be done, both she and Myra were no longer frightened.

"I will get some in a moment," she said, rising from the floor and vanishing through the open *karakimi*.

"Is he hurt?" asked Myra, who had also got up.

"We can't tell," replied Villiers laconically, "but I rather think the poor fellow is."

"Not killed?" asked the girl in a horrified whisper.

"No, no," replied Villiers hastily, "not so bad as that"; adding, under his breath, "At least, I hope to God it's not." Then, as Eileen's footsteps were heard returning, he said, "We'll soon be able to tell what's the matter when we get a little brandy into him."

Taking the bottle from Eileen, Villiers once more vanished through the *shoji* out on to the veranda.

A moment or two passed, with the silence unbroken save for the whispered conversation of the men outside. Then Evelegh called out, "Can you come here, Eileen?"

Both the women went out in response to the summons.

On his back, with his head supported on Evelegh's knees, lay Sekio, quite unconscious, and with a deep cut on the side of his left temple, the bleeding from which had stanched itself by natural congealment. Villiers knelt beside the wounded man, trying, as yet vainly, to force some of the spirit between his tightly closed lips.

Some strips of cloth lay upon the floor of the veranda, just as Evelegh and Villiers had thrown them down after unloosening the injured cook's hands and legs, which had been tightly bound. The former behind his back.

"He's not dead!" exclaimed Eileen; "surely Sekio is not dead?"

"I hope not. I do not think so," replied Evelegh, glancing up at his wife's white, horror-stricken face.

Eileen knelt down and took the man's cold hands between her own, and commenced to chafe them, and at last Villiers succeeded in forcing a few drops of brandy between his lips.

A few moments later and Sekio slowly opened his eyes, closing them again quickly, with an expression of terror, as his gaze fell upon Eileen and Myra.

For ten minutes he lay apparently again unconscious, and Evelegh and Villiers exchanged anxious glances. Then the injured man once more opened his eyes and asked faintly, "*Doshtu? Doshtu?*" ("What is the matter? What has happened?") Adding, after a pause, "*Nan doke des? Dare da?*" ("What time is it? Who is there?")

When Evelegh had answered him, Sekio asked for Rosamund, 'the heart of O Ku Sama,' and then once more he drifted into an only semi-conscious condition.

"It is quite clear that he is not fit to be questioned just now," said Evelegh gently. "We must move him into the house. I do not think there is much the matter. The cut is a superficial one, and the poor fellow doesn't appear to have lost very much blood. If he's not hurt elsewhere, perhaps in an hour or so he may be able to tell us something."

When Sekio had been moved into the kitchen and made comfortable upon a *futon* hastily spread out, Villiers said: "Evelegh, you must stay with your wife and Miss Helmont. They cannot be left alone. But I think it would be well for me to have a good look round the place. I may discover something. Have you a lantern handy?"

"Yes," replied Evelegh, "we've an old dark lantern. Eileen knows where it is." Then he added, as his wife left them to find the lantern, "I don't like your going alone, though."

"Please don't," exclaimed Myra earnestly. And

then she added, "If——" then paused suddenly and turned away.

Had there been light enough, Villiers would have noticed that the pallor had suddenly left her cheeks, and that a deep flush of colour suffused them.

"Oh, it's all right, old chap," said Villiers, replying to Evelegh; "I think I ought. You needn't be alarmed, Miss Helmont," he continued; "nothing is likely to happen. And even if anything did I think I can give a good account of myself." He drew a revolver from his pocket, and added, "Evelegh, though I've been out here so long, and get on with the natives all right, I never go about at night without this."

Five minutes later and Villiers, a lantern in one hand, which threw a stream of searching rays into the shadow-enshrouded garden, and his revolver in the other, cautiously went down the veranda steps, and started on his tour of inspection.

He was by temperament a brave man, but for a moment he paused and thought of Myra. He had made light of the risk. But there was a grave one. The mere fact of his carrying the lantern, which was necessary if his search was to be of the slightest use, placed him at a terrible disadvantage in the event of hidden foes.

He walked right round the house, flashing the light into every obscure corner, sending its searching rays into the bushes on the hill-side; but beyond a few trampled shrubs and flowers at one corner of the path which ran along the front of the house he discovered nothing. There was not a trace of baby

Rosamund, Mishima, or any one else, and a visit to the detached pavilion in which Eileen kept school disclosed nothing.

He was just about to return when he heard Evelegh calling. Villiers hurried back along the path and entered the house.

"You have found nothing?" questioned Evelegh eagerly.

"Nothing of any account, though it looks as if there had been some sort of struggle near the end of the veranda. But why did you call?"

"Because Sekio has recovered consciousness and evidently wishes to tell us something. I thought you might be useful, and I should like you to hear every word, too."

Villiers found that Sekio had been propped up, and that other lamps had been lighted. The man's wrinkled face looked ghastly pale beneath the bandage tied round his head. He was now, however, quite conscious, and evidently anxious to speak.

Sekio's English was at no time very fluent, and on this occasion, what with his wound, loss of blood, and the shock he had sustained, it was quite incomprehensible; so it was fortunate Villiers had returned with the party.

As the man told his story at Villiers' suggestion in his own tongue, but in phraseology which left many blanks to be filled in to produce complete ideas and a connected meaning, Villiers interpreted.

Briefly, and robbed of much circumlocution, the story was as follows:

"O Senkyōshi and you, O Ku Sama," commenced

the wounded man, "I am grieved that you should find me thus, and that the 'heart of O Ku Sama' should be taken away."

Eileen would have interrupted, but Evelegh laid his hand gently on her arm, saying:

"Do not ask any questions now, dear. It may confuse his mind, and we want to get at the bottom of this terrible mystery."

After a pause, Sekio continued:

"It was just before the sun got down behind the Metami peak that I heard 'the heart of O Ku Sama' (Rosamund) cry out, at first for O Ku Sama herself, and then for Mishima. The little one was in the garden, and Mishima I knew with her close by, and so I took little notice. Then I heard the cry of Mishima herself calling me and Otimi, who had gone away home half an hour or more. Afterwards I heard some one coming quickly through the house from the front to the back, where I was preparing the vegetables for Senkyōshi San's dinner and that of O Ku Sama and the foreign lady. But before I could turn round Mishima—I am sure it was Mishima," the speaker added slowly and earnestly—"rushed past me, and vanished as though going to the pavilion. And then," Sekio went on with difficulty, and with his hand pressed against the wound in his head, "there were other—men's—footsteps. I turned to see what was the matter, and two men rushed at me. One dealt me a blow with something he had in his hand, and as I staggered backward against the *shoji*—which you see, O Senkyōshi San, is broken—the men threw them-

selves upon me, and I remember no more until I awoke to find Villiers San pouring *saké* into my mouth and O Ku Sama herself rubbing the hands of her most unworthy and despicable servant."

"The brandy!" exclaimed Villiers, sharply, who had sat down beside Sekio whilst he was telling his story. "Quick with it."

For the space of five minutes or so Sekio lapsed into a state of semi-unconsciousness.

"Don't be alarmed," said Villiers, seeing Eileen's and Myra's terrified faces peering down at him in the dim light. "He has only fainted. Poor chap, he must have had a knock-out blow of some sort. It's a good thing the rascals didn't do for him altogether."

"I wonder if he recognised either of the men," said Myra.

"Wait," said Evelegh, "till he comes round, then perhaps we may learn."

At last Sekio opened his eyes again slowly and gazed round at the anxious faces surrounding him.

"Did you, Sekio San," asked Villiers gently, "see the faces of the men who attacked you? Think carefully."

The man closed his eyes, and for several minutes he made no reply. In the chambers of his mind at first were only confused images, a tremulous and evanescent series of recollections like the intermittent current from imperfectly connected cells of electrical batteries. At last out of these, and from the chaos arising from his weakness and wound, there emerged a figure, slowly growing upon the retina of his vision.

Several times he made an attempt as though to speak, only to have blankness overcome his mind once more. Evelegh studied his face, reading in these spasmodic efforts the attempt to recall something but half-remembered.

At last Sekio suddenly raised himself into a sitting posture and said slowly :

"It was——" Then he paused, and after passing his hand across his forehead, as though seeking to clear his brain, he said slowly and hesitatingly, "It was Tetsuya."

"Tetsuya!" Evelegh repeated the name slowly and distinctly. "You are certain it was Tetsuya?"

"It was Tetsuya. None other," replied Sekio. "I saw him but a lightning flash of time as his companion struck me, but I should know him anywhere by the scar across his face."

"I am not surprised," said Villiers shortly. "He's an awful scoundrel."

"What is to be done? Oh, Chris, what is to be done?" asked Eileen pitifully, breaking down for the first time. "Oh, Rosamund, baby Rosamund, what have they done to you, my darling?"

Both Evelegh's and Villiers' faces were stern and set. Neither of them felt able to give much comfort. They could, after all, only guess at what had happened.

It was now late. The lights of the town down in the valley had been put out one by one. And even if either Villiers or Evelegh could have left Eileen and Myra to go in search of assistance, or of the Sonchō, they were unlikely to obtain the first, or succeed in

arousing the second to move in the matter till the next day.

Perhaps even further ill menaced them. The same idea must have struck both men almost simultaneously, for they spoke at the same moment.

"Let us close up the house," said Evelegh; adding, "You are sure you thoroughly searched in every direction, Hubert?"

"Everywhere," was the reply, "except the bottom of the garden near the look-out. I will go there now," he continued, "whilst you are shutting up the house. But I fear the brutes have cleared, and got clean away."

Evelegh had no hope his friend would discover anything; but Eileen begged so earnestly that Villiers should go, that he raised no objection.

As Villiers took the lantern and turned to go out, Myra gave him a look that set the blood beating in his veins. It said, as plainly as a silent message could, "You are a brave man. God preserve you from harm."

And Myra was right.

It did need a peculiar and high type of courage to face a search, alone, of that dark garden, always mysterious by reason of its stunted trees, rocks, hidden recesses, and extraordinary shadows. It would be easy enough, after all (as Villiers fully recognised), for him to be done to death by a lurking foe.

But nothing more sinister than shadows, rocks, and trees met the rays of his lantern as he flashed it on either side of him. And at the look-out he saw

only one of Rosamund's dolls propped up against the end of the bamboo seat, and a little wicker cart which had been made by Koba, the boy, overturned and broken, as though some one had stepped upon it. The sight of these things caused him to curse the wretches who had wrought the catastrophe that had befallen.

When he returned to the house he found that it was shut up. All the *amado*,[1] save those just at the top of the front veranda steps, had been shoved along in their grooves, and the *shoji* behind them had been closed. Eileen met him at the top of the steps. Her lips refused for a moment to frame the question she wished to put; but he did not wait for it.

"I have found nothing," he exclaimed sadly, "except the spot where Rosamund was evidently playing when the attack was made. It was near the look-out seat. Her toys are there just as she left them."

Eileen turned away with a sob. And yet in the depth of her heart there was gladness that the garden had yielded no deeper tragedy than the poor deserted toys of her little one.

"Sekio is sleeping," she said, as Villiers closed the *amado* behind him.

Both Evelegh and Myra were seated in the room the former used for his study, on the walls of which hung a curved Japanese sword and two sporting rifles.

Myra was speaking to her brother-in-law earnestly as Eileen entered.

"I wish I had told you," exclaimed the girl

[1] Outside shutters.

piteously, "but I thought nothing of it. I—I thought it might be only Mishima and a friend talking."

"No one can blame you, dear," said Evelegh gently and slowly. "You could not know; but I wish to God you had told me all the same."

Myra had given him an account of what she had witnessed early that morning relating to Mishima. It threw little light, of course, upon the events of the afternoon as detailed by Sekio; but it served to throw suspicion upon Mishima, who had so mysteriously vanished with her charge.

Myra had just finished her narration when Villiers came in. He had stayed behind Eileen a moment to see that the bottom fastening of the *amado* he had closed was perfectly secure. And as he stooped, a few yards farther along the veranda a piece of paper caught the rays of the lantern and his eye.

He held this scrap of paper (which was an envelope addressed to Evelegh) in his hand as he entered the room. But something suddenly caused him to slip it in his pocket and to give a quick look at Evelegh, conveying to him that he wished to speak to him in private.

The attention of Eileen and Myra happened to be for a moment distracted, and this allowed Evelegh to let Villiers see that he understood. When he had heard Villiers' report of his search, and had told the latter and Eileen and what Myra had just been saying, he said:

"There is nothing more we can do, Eileen. I think you had both better go to bed. I don't think either Villiers or I will turn in to-night. We

have two big chairs here, and can make ourselves comfortable.

Eileen hesitated for a moment or two. It was always her desire to share her husband's troubles or worries, and to-night her own distress of mind was so great that she scarcely knew how to spare him from her sight. But the terrible fatigue arising from her long walk in the afternoon, and the strain of the last two hours which assailed her, conquered.

When they were alone and the *karakimi* had been closed, Villiers seated himself in a chair, and, pulling the letter from his pocket, held it out to Evelegh.

"I found this," he said, "on the floor of the veranda. It is possible that it may have dropped accidentally; but you will see."

Evelegh took the missive and turned it over. It was addressed to him, but there is so little 'character' in the handwriting of Japanese of the lower class that he could not recognise the writer.

Villiers watched him narrowly as he turned the straw-coloured envelope over in his hands.

Then Evelegh broke it open and pulled out the long, narrow sheet of paper which it contained.

"I think," he said wearily, passing it to Villiers, "I will get you to read it. You are much better acquainted with Japanese caligraphy than I am."

Villiers took the flimsy strip of paper in his hand and held it near the light. He ran his eyes over the black, intricate groups of characters for a moment, then he slowly read them out.

"I am giving you the sense," he said, "rather than the phraseology."

Evelegh nodded. The letter ran thus:

"Take warning, O Senkyōshi, barbarian teacher of devil's doctrine that you are, by what has this day befallen. Your 'moon-faced' child will be far away, where you cannot see it or find it, by the time of your return. And great ill and pain will befall it if you do not carry out the commands of those who write. On the other hand, if you and your foreign women leave Kin-shiu and go back to your own country, with a promise never to return to teach the —— (Villiers left out an abominable phrase) Jaso kyō, all will be well. On the day you reach Yokohama to depart in the great *jokisen* (mail steamer) for your own country, at night in the street will be placed your little 'moon-faced' child. The *junsa* (police) will find the child, and you will be able to get it back. But" (and here followed a terrible threat regarding Eileen and Myra) "if you do not depart more evil will happen. And if you endeavour to find the hiding-place of her whom we have taken away, or complain to the Sonchō, she will be put to death."

When Villiers had finished reading the message there was silence. Through Evelegh's mind passed all the varied possibilities of anguish and horror that the letter conjured up.

As he did not speak, Villiers broke the silence.

"You will go?" he asked.

For a moment his friend did not answer. In his mind a great struggle was commencing. He had

been suddenly brought face to face with what he recognised as the great crisis of his life.

After the events of the last few hours he felt there was no possibility of doubt that the threats contained in the missive he held crumpled in his hand would be carried out. At such crises what should be the reasoned judgment of hours is often crowded into that of intensely vital minutes. The man in him cried out for the safety of those he loved ; for the restoration of Baby Rosamund, who was the dearest possession he had on earth save one ; for some rest and peace from the constant menace which had seemed to envelop his life during the last few months. He even for a moment told himself that the ground in which he sought to scatter the seed of the Jaso kyō he preached was too stony for any good result.

Then the higher nature which had impelled him to exile himself triumphed. He thought of those who had been led to adopt the faith he taught and preached ; of others who had been influenced less directly perhaps, but so that they now led lives of less reproach than formerly. And then, like a flash of illuminating and strengthening counsel, came into his troubled mind the words, "He that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me."

There could for him be no going back. It was possible that he might be able to send Eileen and Myra to a place of safety. As for Baby Rosamund, she was in the hands of God.

He turned to Villiers, and his voice shook with emotion as he said :

" I at all events shall stay. I hope that it may be possible to send Eileen and my sister to Nikko."

" And Rosamund ? " The words slipped almost involuntarily from Villiers' lips.

" I believe in God and trust Him," replied Evelegh simply.

Villiers smothered an exclamation. Then he glanced at his friend's face. It was perfectly calm now, and it even seemed to the watcher that it was illuminated with some non-external light or radiance. He took Evelegh's hand and gripped it tight. He said nothing, but the action conveyed to the two men, who had been close companions and friends for years, a world of meaning.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PRICE OF PEACE

NONE of the inhabitants of the Mission House slept restfully, though they were undisturbed by any untoward incident. Their nerves were at high tension when they had sought sleep, and the noises of the house after the warm day were sufficient to keep all save Myra—who was a sound sleeper—wakeful. Never had the creaking of woodwork and the squeaking of the field-mice beneath the floors seemed more continuous and noisy.

Eileen lay and listened to the sounds of the house, cooling after the hot day, to the *nidzumi* scuttling beneath the floor of her room, and to her sister's quiet, regular breathing, until from sheer weariness and exhaustion she herself fell asleep.

As for Evelegh and Villiers, although after a time they had closed their eyes, and pretended to doze, neither really slept. Dawn found them awake and confronted with the problem which had been brought into existence by the events of the previous day.

Both Eileen and Myra were also early astir. There was no Mishima to prepare their morning meal; and, so far as they knew, Sekio was unfit for work. As

the two girls were dressing it was only natural that they should discuss the misfortune which had so suddenly befallen the household.

"I cannot help thinking," exclaimed Myra, "that Mishima's disappearance has something suspicious in it. Why should she have vanished, leaving no message behind her, if innocent? The men who stole Rosamund could not want to be encumbered with Mishima too, unless she were an accomplice."

And unwilling as Eileen was to suspect her little maid, who had always been so devoted to her small charge, she could only say:

"I don't like to harbour a suspicion of Mishima's faithfulness, Myra, nor to think ill of her. But I cannot understand, I cannot understand."

"I shall always blame myself bitterly," continued Myra, "for not having told Chris or you what I saw. I am sure there must be some connection between that mysterious meeting and the disappearance of dear baby and Mishima."

"You must not trouble," said Eileen gently; "you could not know."

As she was speaking a knock sounded upon the framework of the *karakimi*. It was Evelegh.

"You may come in," called Eileen; "we are quite ready."

The *karakimi* were slid aside, and Evelegh entered.

"How are you two?" he inquired anxiously, kissing his wife; adding, ere either could reply, "I hope you have got some sleep."

"I have slept very little," replied Eileen; "but I think we both feel much better, thanks, dear.

You have no news? There is nothing fresh to tell?"

"No; except that Sekio is pretty well all right. He has slept like a top, I should imagine. I thought he would be laid up for days; but I found him asleep, and quite fit to get up, and see about something for us to eat."

Evelegh said nothing concerning the letter Villiers had found. There was no need, he argued, to alarm his wife and Myra unnecessarily. Either he or Villiers would have to go down into Kin-shiu as soon as possible, to make arrangements for the two girls to go under escort—which the Sonchō would scarcely refuse—to Nikko.

Already he had discussed the situation with his friend. Both were agreed that the two girls ought to be sent away—if Eileen would consent to go—and that it would be wise to consult with a few of the Christian attendants and members of the Church regarding what steps were to be taken to search for Rosamund, rather than approach the Sonchō or other official, and perhaps thereby precipitate a tragedy.

At breakfast, which Sekio brought in almost as soon as Eileen and Myra made their appearance, the subject of Mishima's disappearance was discussed. Neither Evelegh nor his wife was predisposed to suspect her of treachery, although circumstances were distinctly suspicious, and all the information that Sekio had been able to afford pointed to her complicity when viewed in connection with the interview Myra had witnessed the morning before.

Villiers, on the other hand, was frankly sceptical regarding the little maid's non-complicity.

"I know too much of the lower class Japanese women and girls," he said, in response to Eileen's appeal not to judge Mishima unheard; "nine out of ten are not to be trusted, by foreigners at any rate, farther than one can see them. I've found it so on the plantation; I found it so in the business at Yokohama."

Eileen listened to Villiers, but seemed still unconvinced. At last she said:

"Somehow or other I cannot believe Mishima would be guilty of such duplicity, or was not too fond of and devoted to baby for an instant to connive at such a crime."

"The sentiment and charity of your remarks do you credit," said Villiers, smiling somewhat cynically, "but I fear you will find your estimate of Mishima's character faulty."

"We shall see," replied Eileen quietly.

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Sekio, who not only announced that Otimi, the gardener, had come, but also that Ito sought an interview.

Just before Sekio had entered the room Evelegh and the rest had heard voices, and then some one asking of Sekio, "*Danna san o uchi de gozarimashta?*" ("Is your master at home?"), so that they were not altogether surprised.

Evelegh and Villiers exchanged a quick glance. Then the latter told Sekio to show the man into the study.

"Perhaps he brings some news," he said to Eileen as he rose to go out. "I will see what he has to say, and call you, dear, if it is anything of importance. I think I will get you to come with me, Villiers," he added, turning to the latter; "you may be useful as an interpreter."

As Evelegh stepped along the short passage which connected the two rooms his heart almost failed him. What if the mission of Ito was but to tell him of the completion of the tragedy? It was too horrible to contemplate. As was perhaps only natural, he forgot that Ito's mission might be on quite a different matter. There was for him just then but one subject possible—the event which had desolated his family circle.

The *karakimi* were already pushed back, for Ito had entered the room from the front veranda, and as Evelegh and Villiers stepped inside the man was to be seen seated upon the floor close to the former's desk, awaiting the Senkyōshi's arrival.

After the usual polite and ceremonious greetings, when Evelegh and Villiers had seated themselves Ito told how early that morning he had heard what had happened up at the Mission House.

"O Senkyōshi San," he said, "as I looked out upon the Ichi-Machi before I commenced my labours, I saw there was muchee people come together at the corner near the tea-house of the Moon and Cherry Blossom. So I hastened to see what the muchee talkee was about. Those who had run together thus were talking like frogs in a marsh, and for the time I could learn nothing. At last I pushed into

where I saw Sataro San, the fortune-teller, standing. Have your ears not heard,' said he, 'how the child of the Senkyōshi, foreign devil, has been taken away?' I told him I had not heard. Then he laughed a great laugh,[1] and told me that he had heard the news at the Moon and Cherry Blossom the night before. But he would not let me hear or know who had told him——"

Evelegh and Villiers exchanged glances, and the latter, interrupting the speaker, said :

" O Ito San, was the talk of the many people in the street angry towards us, and did many seem to have heard the news ? "

To which Ito replied :

" Many, O Senkyōshi San. And it was anger that most had, and not sorrow that the child of your house had been stolen. I could discover nothing," he went on slowly, " concerning the taking away of the little one. But I have since gathered up here a word and there a word—like the birds of the field pick up grains when the rice is husked—and I have found that those who wish you harm, who are the friends of Kameya, the owner of the 'Golden Kitten,' were not there last night. Can you not see plainly ? " asked Ito after a pause, during which his hearers exchanged glances of awakening comprehension.

Sekio's statement that one of the men who had struck him was undoubtedly Tetsuya Mori was thus receiving confirmation.

Before replying to Ito, Evelegh said to Villiers :

" There would appear to be little doubt regarding

[1] This is figurative. The Japanese seldom laugh outright.

who struck this blow at us. Shall we tell Ito of the letter?"

Villiers, to whom Ito was a comparative stranger, gave the man a quick and searching glance. Apparently he was satisfied, for he replied, "I think, with you, it would be well to do so."

"My friend here, Villiers San," said Evelegh, "O Ito San, has in his mind that you are right; that it is indeed Tetsuya Mori and his friends and those of Kameya who have done this thing. I know you to be a wise man and a friend," continued Evelegh earnestly and watching Ito's face, "therefore we are bound to tell you all that we know, so that you may exercise your mind to advise us."

Ito's face was like that of most Japanese of his class, not what is called an 'expressive' one; but across it passed just the ghost, as it were, of a smile of pleasure and satisfaction as he replied:

"You speak truly, O Senkyōshi San; though I am not a *Shinja* (Christian) I do not forget that you are a good man, and that O Ku Sama has a beautiful face and a tender heart for those who are poor and sick. I may be trusted. The Jaso kyō which you teach is good."

Then Evelegh, pulling out the letter he had received the night before, handed it to Villiers for him to read aloud. Whilst he did so Evelegh watched Ito's face to see what impression was made on the latter's mind by what he heard and the threats. It was not an easy matter to discover, although once or twice there passed over the face of the Japanese a fleeting expression of horror and amazement. But he

said nothing, and gave no sign, save once or twice a grunt of astonishment and possibly of anger, until Villiers had read the last word and had paused fully half a minute. Then he said:

"O Senkyōshi San and you, O Villiers San, it is an evil thing that has happened, and foretells much trouble and maybe bloodshed. In it I see the hand of Tetsuya Mori, Kameya, and the *bonsan*[1] of the Temple. What did I warn you of a month ago? You are a brave man, O Senkyōshi San, but wisdom should go with courage. Is it not so?" And the speaker turned to Villiers for confirmation.

Villiers nodded his head and said, "Surely, O Ito San."

Then the latter went on:

"There is but one way, O Senkyōshi San. It is to do as the writer of this, whoever he may be—that I cannot tell, for your servant is very ignorant and stupid—says——"

He paused, but as Evelegh did not speak he continued:

"If you value the life of O Ku Sama and safety for yourself you will leave Kin-shiu, and that ere the sun has set again."

The man spoke very earnestly, and Evelegh could not fail to be impressed. In his heart of hearts the latter knew Ito was genuinely anxious regarding what might befall; but, remembering his former conversation of a month or so before, Evelegh realised the impossibility of making a permanent impression upon Ito's mind regarding the all-importance of his work

[1] Priests.

to him. He thought that he had succeeded then; but now a fresh crisis, or at least an aggravation of the former one, had arisen, Ito's one desire was to see him abandon his work and flee from the machinations of those who were so bitterly opposed to him.

He therefore merely contented himself with saying: "I thank you, Ito, for your advice and warning, but were I otherwise willing to take it I could not do so until my little child is recovered."

Ito, perhaps thinking that the Senkyōshi was in truth wavering, hastily said:

"She would be found in Yokohama, never fear, O Senkyōshi San, as is promised in the letter which O Villiers San has read. If you go not, then"—and Ito's gestures were expressive of what would happen to little Rosamund—"you will never see the little moon-faced one again. Not alive. It may even be that you have the body sent back to you bit by bit."

Evelegh and Villiers shuddered. Neither had much doubt but that Ito spoke the truth.

It was Villiers who broke the silence which followed on this statement.

"Know you not, Ito San," he said, "that as sure as harm is done to the Senkyōshi's child vengeance will follow from the authorities, who must punish such crimes against the people of other lands who may dwell amongst you?"

Ito shook his head. All this might be quite true; perhaps it was, he thought. But he knew that the crime would be difficult to trace, and therefore to punish; that the Sonchō was neither favourable to

Evelegh San nor his Jaso kyō, and that the *bonsan* of the Temple in Bungo machi were powerful; and, above all, neither the Senkyōshi nor O Ku Sama nor her sister would be likely to survive to make the complaint. There would be an end of them; that was all.

It was impossible for Ito to foresee or comprehend the possibility of a vengeance which would emanate from the land whence the foreigners came far across the sea, that in his childhood's days he had gazed out upon from the promontory above Shimoda.

"It may be as you say," he continued after a pause, "but what good is vengeance when those for whom it is undertaken are"—and he made an expressive gesture to accompany the words—"gone to dwell with their ancestors? Believe me, O Senkyōshi San, what I say is what I know. Go you away to Yokohama, and the little one that O Ku Sama loves as her life will appear. But you must never return to Kin-shiu."

Evelegh spent several minutes in once again attempting to make Ito, who, it was evident, was in great distress and anxiety concerning the position of affairs, understand that what he suggested was impossible.

"What you say, O Senkyōshi San," the man replied, "concerning the august departure of O Ku Sama and her sister will not satisfy those who have done this thing. O Ku Sama is a woman; it is not against her that Tetsuya Mori, Kameya, and the *bonsan* are plotting, but against you, the preacher of the Jaso kyō and the upsetter and opposer of

the things that are. Kameya would become a poor man if more of his girls left his *chaya*, and if his patrons no longer found amusement and opportunities for gambling beneath his roof."

Villiers at last intervened. It appeared to his more practical mind that they were arriving at nothing; were making no advance towards either a solution of the mystery, nor to discovering the best means of tracking the abductors.

"It is obvious," he said, "that Ito San is unable to afford us any further information. We are grateful to him for what he has told us; but time is precious, Evelegh, and we should be up and doing."

"I am of the same opinion," agreed the latter. "It would be well for us to see the Sonchō, though I fear he is unlikely to give us much assistance."

It was with a heavy heart that Ito San took his leave and went slowly down the garden path. Evelegh's attitude towards his suggestion that the best thing to be done was for the Mission to be abandoned was a mystery. He had always thought the Senkyōshi and O Ku Sama were fond of their child; but now they were willing to give up all chance (as Ito honestly believed) of seeing it again, and for what? That they might try to teach the Jaso kyō to people who neither wanted to learn it, nor to hear anything about the strange God that the Senkyōshi worshipped. In the soporific religion most of Ito's friends and acquaintances practised there was little call for sacrifice, and few principals were involved. But though he could not comprehend the Jaso kyō in its fullness, Ito knew that Evelegh

San was a good man, and he would do what he could to help him. Perhaps if he spent an hour or so in Yumoto Kameya's tea-house he might hear something. Perhaps even he might be able to get into communication with those who had stolen Baby Rosamund away. He would then try whether their cupidity could not be excited by the possibility of a ransom. So Ito San took his way down the hill-side and along Bungo-machi to the 'Golden Kitten,' where he found for the time of day an unwonted stir of excitement.

Old Kameya, whose wrinkled, yellow face looked more evil than usual, was engaged in earnest conversation with several of the *habitués*, who, it was evident, were deeply interested in what he had to say. Ito San took a seat on the floor in a corner of the big common room of the *chaya* and prepared to listen. One of Kameya's girls came to him, and smiled at him with painted lips and with eyes which, of such women, are bold, bright, and restless all the world over.

"What does the honourable guest wish for? Is it food, dancing, or love?" she asked.

Ito San hesitated. It had been a long time since the 'Golden Kitten' had had his patronage. Indeed, he had avoided the place ever since he had begun to have some dim conception of the Jaso kyō which the Senkyōshi San taught, and had learned to respect Evelegh and his wife, and to be touched by their kindness and charity. But he knew that he could scarcely remain without becoming a customer, and that it was of vital consequence for him to discover what was in the air; so he ordered a cup of the

extra strong and vile *saké* which Kameya dispensed to his clients, drew out his tiny-bowled pipe from his sleeve, filled it with mild tobacco of almost the colour of straw, and commenced to smoke and listen.

If Yumoto Kameya had noticed Ito's entry he did not give any sign of the fact, but continued his conversation. He spoke in rather low tones, and it was impossible for Ito to catch more than a few words here and there. Outside the sunlight was pouring down into the street, making the motes of dust in the air dance like fire-flies and throwing heavy shadows upon the ill-kept roadway. Inside the 'Golden Kitten' the light was dim by comparison. All except a single panel of the *shoji* were shut close, and these were constructed of a yellow paper of unusual density and thickness. It was not well, Kameya often said, to let every passer-by see what his customers were doing, nor who they were. Perhaps because of these almost opaque *shoji* his clients were less cautious both in their actions and talk than otherwise they would have been.

As Ito San sipped the *saké* which bold-eyed O Hino San brought him, the fire of a quickened intelligence seemed to flow through his veins. There was not enough in the tiny cup to more than temporarily stimulate his faculties; and it was not the hour for O Hino San and the rest of her companions to drop into the cups 'the sweet waters of oblivion' which made their nightly tasks of fascination and robbery the easier.

Soon, as Ito San listened intently, he gathered the trend of the earnest talk which Kameya and his

companions were having. From the first the listener had had no doubt that it referred to the Senkyōshi San and the disappearance of his child, but as the minutes passed by he caught fragments of still graver import.

Possibly emboldened by the fact that so very few of the dwellers in Kin-shiu were at all favourable to the 'foreign dogs,' and that the Sonchō himself was in reality as bitterly antagonistic to them as his semi-official position permitted, and maybe forgetful that Ito San was known to occasionally attend the Dendō kwan, Yumoto Kameya and his companions gradually spoke in louder tones and took little heed of their words.

"It will be easy enough," exclaimed Kameya, with a grin which disclosed his yellow teeth viciously, "to get rid of the little white-faced foreign devil. No need for the knife," he continued, with a rattle in his throat which did service for a laugh; "just a squeeze, and then into the river with her, and if she is ever found, it will be many miles from where Kitsuni and Tetsuya Mori have taken her. But what matter, after all?" he went on after a pause, during which one of his companions enjoined caution and more guarded speech. "There will be no one to trouble us after to-morrow."

Then the speaker, who in his hatred of the Senkyōshi and the teaching of the Seisho became excited and less guarded in his words, went on to tell how the priests of the temple in Bungo-machi had promised their aid and support to the scheme which Kameya and his fellow-plotters had devised.

It was very simple.

And as Ito San listened his heart sank.

How was it possible, he questioned in his mind, for the Senkyōshi, O Ku Sama, and the 'honourable lady aunt' to escape when their enemies were so many and their friends so few and feeble?

Although of another race, and of one that could not easily comprehend (though able to assimilate with astonishing quickness) the ideas of Occidental peoples, Ito San was possessed by a great despair as he thought on what he had heard.

To warn the Senkyōshi after his interview but an hour or two ago seemed to him useless. Such an act might even precipitate the impending disaster. Ito was not a clever man, nor was he capable of unravelling the tangle of events. There was, so it seemed to him, but one way open—the one he had advocated so eloquently up at the Mission House, but which had so entirely failed to commend itself to the Senkyōshi and Villiers San.

No, he must think, and the effort was a great one.

As he rose and left the *chaya*, passing from its obscurity into the exquisite sunshine, his heart was heavy, for Kameya's words, "There will be no to-morrow for the foreign devils," rang in his ears.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CARRYING AWAY OF ROSAMUND

MEANWHILE, where were Rosamund and Mishima?

The men who, under the direction of Tsunetaro Kuroki and Yumoto Kameya, had succeeded in overpowering Mishima and capturing baby Rosamund had not wasted any time after accomplishing their object. Indeed, through a mistake they had been much later in putting their plan of abduction into operation than they had at first intended; so that had Evelegh and Villiers returned but some half or three-quarters of an hour earlier, the attempt to spirit away Rosamund would have probably been frustrated.

When Mishima fled with her little charge in her arms from the garden where the latter had been playing, and rushed through the house only to fall into the hands of others of the scoundrels who had run round to the back to cut her off, Evelegh and Villiers and the others were indeed almost within sight of the house along the hill-side road on their way back from the tea plantation. It was only by the merest chance that Rosamund's capturers did not

select that same road as a means of reaching their destination in the hills, about eight *ri* from Kin-shiu. But Oku-dani, as the party stood near the pavilion discussing their plans, with Mishima crouching against the wall, her hands tied tightly behind her back, and little Rosamund crying at her side, argued in favour of the upper and much less frequented road. He contended that though the other way would enable them to reach their destination more quickly, from the fact of its being a better and more direct route, it was more than possible that if a pursuit was undertaken the Senkyōshi San and his friend, Villiers San, would be almost sure to follow the main or principal road, as they would know little or nothing of the country and the by-paths.

"Then again," said Oku-dani, "we are more likely to be seen on the big road, and although few would tell the Senkyōshi and his friend that they had seen us, one might."

And so it came to pass that when the abductors, having first securely bound and gagged Sekio the cook, left the house, they took their way up the hill road, past the waterfall and the big tea-house standing on a plateau cut out of the hill-side, the resort of many folk from Kin-shiu on festival days; then, striking into the bridle path which led on to the little village of Tunigawa, they in the end encircled the ridge of hills, on the south-western slope of which the Mission House was built, and at the foot of which a great many of the Kin-shiu houses nestled. Afterwards they followed the raised, narrow path of red earth which ran across the rice-fields, and thus

journeyed on towards their destination as rapidly as possible.

Mishima was dragged along, with her hands still bound behind her, for the men had thought it best not to free the little maid from the cords on the hill-side path lest she should break away from them, and gaining the cover of the woods escape, and possibly carry back news of their flight and the direction in which they were going. And now they had, in their eagerness to put as great a distance between themselves and the Mission House as possible, forgotten all about Mishima's hands being bound. One of the men was carrying Rosamund, who had fallen asleep on his shoulder, not ungently; for the Japanese are at heart a children-loving race, and they most of them regarded her capture as only, after all, a means to an end, and for themselves had no desire to do her harm.

From the eyes of Mishima there still trickled tears, though, with the stoicism of the women of her race, she controlled any violent indication of either distress or of the pain she was suffering from the cords which were cutting into her wrists most cruelly. She wondered sadly, as she trudged along the road with two or three men in front and a couple of them close behind her, what O Ku Sama and the Senkyōshi would think when they returned home and found Rosamund had disappeared, and she with her.

Mishima was little more than a child, it is true, but she realised very keenly the suspicion that would inevitably fall upon her of having been a party to the

carrying off of Rosamund, and she was very much distressed at the thought. She could imagine the grief with which O Ku Sama and the Senkyōshi San would make the discovery, and the anger, perhaps, which they would also feel at her own absence.

Just for the moment it was impossible for Mishima to imagine that either Rosamund or she would ever return to the Mission House. Her one idea was what were these men, whose faces were not reassuring, and from scraps of whose talk she learned a terrible purpose if their demands were not complied with by the Senkyōshi San, going to do with her and her little charge? She gathered, as they tramped along the path, mile after mile, in the darkness, that they were bound for some place situated in the farther range of hills, which lay distant from Kin-shui some fourteen or fifteen miles.

After a time her mind became weary of speculating what was going to happen to her and Rosamund, and she watched the stars shining in the dark blue sky above like diamond points, and began vaguely to wonder what they could all mean, and how they were held up in the blue vault.

At last, just as the short summer's night was coming to an end, and after several brief halts by the wayside, they reached the foot of the hills which had showed, during the last two or three miles along the road, inky black but sharply defined against the background of sky. The river which flowed through Kin-shiu skirted the bottom of these hills, and it was necessary to cross it by a bridge, one of those spider-like and fragile con-

trivances which at first take the place of more substantial structures which have been swept away by the floods.

As the men stepped on to the vibrating span one of them in advance of the rest called back over his shoulder, no doubt tired and irritated by his walk:

"Why not throw the white-faced child of the Senkyōshi San and the girl over the bridge and have done with them? It would save a lot of trouble," said the man, with an ugly look on his yellow face, "and we could get back to Kin-shiu by mid-day and no one would be any the wiser."

But the suggestion met with no sort of approval from the others. Possibly the man who had carried little Rosamund through the night had children of his own, and had a tender heart. The others opposed the suggestion because they knew in their own minds that Tsunetaro and Yumoto Kameya, if they heard of the death of the child and of the little maid, would probably refuse to pay the money they had promised, and so long as the child was alive they hoped, by discreet hints, to extract eventually a considerable ransom from the Senkyōshi San. So when the bridge was traversed the little party, in the growing light of dawn, which turned the black hills first to a plum colour and then tipped them with a roseate hue as the sun climbed up out of the distant sea, turned to the right and struck in among the woods, and at last found a narrow path leading upwards. Half an hour's climbing and a hut-like building was reached, set amid the trees and hidden from the valley below; but notwithstanding this, commanding a wide prospect

of it through a small gap not far from the hut itself.

Here, just as the morning sun rose above the Kin-shiu hills from whence they had come, Mishima and Rosamund, who had awakened, were put into the hut, and the door securely fastened from the outside. And then the men sat down to consult what further should be done.

Eventually it was agreed that two should remain behind, and that the rest, after a sleep, should make their way back to Kin-shiu to learn what had happened in the interval, and, in a measure, to seek to draw away suspicion which might arise from their absence.

When the other men had departed the two who remained talked for some time ere they themselves fell asleep. They were seated so close to the wall of the hut that it was easy for Mishima to hear what they were saying, and as she listened a great terror possessed her heart. She had not lived in the home of the Senkyōshi San for nothing these two or three years past, and she was a girl of more than the average intelligence of her class. Soon she had learned to realise that the Senkyōshi San, gentle as he was in most things, was determined and immovable in matters relating to his religion and to what he believed was right and wrong. Therefore, when she heard the two men outside the hut talking of their plans, and learned from what she heard that it was only if the Senkyōshi and O Ku Sama would leave Kin-shiu, and no longer remain to teach the Jaso kyō, that her little charge, who was now

sleeping peacefully and untroubled, would be restored to her parents. And if the Senkyōshi San and O Ku Sama refused to go? That was what troubled little Mishima, and what caused her heart to sink with a sick feeling of horror.

The men outside had made no secret of the fate that would befall baby Rosamund, nor the horrible revenge and terror that they, in their hatred of the Senkyōshi San, had determined to inflict upon him if he were obdurate to their demands for departure. It was a terrible thought to Mishima that the little one to whom she had become so tenderly attached would be mutilated and then killed, but yet there was no other interpretation possible to the words she had heard.

Into the heart of Mishima came a great desire to interpose herself between this little white child and the cruel fate that had been ordained for her. To escape for the moment seemed quite impossible to the girl's mind. The door was securely fastened; and though the men would doubtless drop off to sleep, still, any noise made in breaking out from the hut would surely arouse them and perhaps lead to a swifter end than otherwise would be.

Then, Mishima thought, after all, these men would not accept her sacrifice in place of the one they projected. She was only a little peasant girl, by whose fate nobody save her relatives and the kind-hearted Senkyōshi San and O Ku Sama would be troubled.

So Mishima sat in the dim light of the hut, on the heap of dry fern which was on the floor in one

corner, and wondered what she could do. Her mind was not sufficiently alert to all the moves in the game that was being played by the friends of Kambara and Tsunetaro, and she therefore scarcely realised that it would be in their interests to hold Rosamund and herself as hostages rather than to hasten matters by their premature death.

At last Mishima, wearied with the night's walk and anxiety, and the exercise of her mind over the great problem which confronted it, fell asleep, to be awakened towards noon by the sound of voices, other than those of the men outside, engaged in conversation.

The first words she caught were:

"If the Senkyōshi San's house is destroyed, and he and his white-faced wife and the other white-faced foreign woman are killed, we had better kill the child too." Next, as her own name was mentioned, she heard one of the men say, "Why kill the girl? There is no use in that, and she will find her way home again quite safely without giving us any further trouble."

Then she heard the same voice talking to the two men outside, telling them how that very night there was to be an attack made upon the house of the Senkyōshi at the instigation of Yumoto Kameya and of the priests of the temple in Yake machi, and after that, when the Senkyōshi San, his wife, and sister-in-law had been killed or frightened into promising to leave Kin-shiu, the Mission Hall itself was to be burnt down, and everything connected with the hated Jasō kyō destroyed.

As Mishima listened she became more terror-stricken and horrified than before. It was bad enough that little Rosamund should be in danger of death, but that the Senkyōshi San and her beloved O Ku Sama should also be was more than she could bear.

Then, after more talk and more detailed description of the contemplated attack, the men who had come up the hill-side to confer with her captors took their leave, and she heard the crushing of twigs as they moved away across the little cleared space on which the hut stood and made their way down the hill-side.

Late in the afternoon (when Rosamund woke up hungry and frightened), as Mishima shifted her position and leaned for a moment against the back wall of the hut, she found one of the planks almost on a level with the ground yield somewhat. Upon examining it, she discovered that some one had loosened this plank, or that it had become loose by the rotting of the wood or rusting of the nails with which it was fastened, and that with a very little effort on her part there seemed every possibility that she might be able to push it back far enough to crawl out through the opening.

She made no effort at the moment to force back the plank any farther, for the men in front of the house were still awake; and it was possible that later on they might again doze, which would give her an opportunity for further investigation.

Little Rosamund, hungry and frightened, cried so loudly, and refused to be comforted, that the men hammered heavily on the door of the hut, and called

out harshly, "Be quiet, be quiet, or we shall come in and kill you both." Although Rosamund could not understand what was said, the rough voices made her cling close to Mishima, and hide her curly head beneath the wide sleeve of her little nurse's *kimono.*

Very softly Mishima talked to Rosamund, telling her that she would soon see her Mum-mum again and have something to eat, and telling her to be a good girl and not make a noise so as to make the wicked men who were outside angry.

Rosamund was so thoroughly frightened at the rough voices that she remained almost quiet.

Then as the day went on one of the men opened the door a small space and pushed a cup of water and a few roughly baked rice-cakes into the hut, with the intimation to Mishima that she and the child had better eat something.

When the cakes had been eaten by Rosamund (who at first said they were nasty, but at last was persuaded to try them) she again fell asleep, and soon afterwards Mishima heard the two men stretching themselves on the ground outside and evidently preparing for a nap.

In half an hour she thought it would be safe to attempt to make her escape with Rosamund, and soon she succeeded in pushing aside the loose board, and saw that fortunately the hillside had been cut away behind the house enough to enable her to struggle out through the aperture.

Then she turned to Rosamund, and kissing her, whispered :

"Baby, keep quite quiet, or the wicked men will

hear. If she is quite quiet, Mishima will take Baby back to her Mum-mum."

Little Rosamund's eyes were still heavy with sleep, but she remembered the harsh voices of the men and clung to Mishima, and promised to be very good if Mishima would take her back to Mum-mum.

Very cautiously Mishima dragged herself out through the somewhat narrow aperture which she had made, and then, stretching in her arms she caught little Rosamund beneath her armpits and dragged her almost without noise through the opening.

With a heart beating with alarm lest she should be discovered, Mishima paused for a few moments to listen to the heavy breathing of the two men at the other side of the hut ere she picked up Rosamund on her back, and as stealthily as possible made her way up the hill-side at the back of the hut.

Although Mishima did not know exactly where the hut from which she had escaped was situated, she knew that after descending the hill-side for a little distance by making a short circuit of it, and then making her way into the valley, she would be able to strike the road along which their captors had brought her, and by this means, if she did not reach Kin-shiu, she would be able to find the village through which they had passed in the early hours of the morning, and possibly get help to take her back to the Mission House. Although she felt sure that when her absence was discovered there would be a pursuit, she hoped that she would get a sufficient start to enable her to elude the two men who had been left on guard. She little knew indeed, how important the

latter would conceive her recapture, and that of Rosamund, to be; nor with what persistency they would search for the runaways when once their escape had been discovered.

With toilsome steps Mishima panted her way up the hill-side, avoiding as far as possible the pine-twigs which lay in her path lest their crackle should betray her, and at last she succeeded in penetrating into the wood sufficiently far to enable her to strike off across the hill, and a little later on begin her descent of its side.

Rosamund, used as Mishima was to carrying her in the Japanese fashion on her back about the garden of the Mission House and occasionally along the mountain road which led down to Kin-shiu, proved a very heavy burden for the little maid over the rough ground she was compelled to traverse, and so, long before she reached the valley, Mishima was obliged to sit down on a moss-grown rock in the sun to rest a while. Baby Rosamund played at her feet, taking up the pine needles in her baby hands and tossing them in the air, and occasionally crying out in ecstasy when a breath of wind caught them and blew them away from her. But every time that Rosamund called out Mishima suffered an agony of fear, and said:

"Hush, hush, O Baby San! or the bad men will hear us, and will come after Mishima and you and beat you and kill us."

And although Rosamund did not really fully comprehend what Mishima said, the latter's face was so serious that the child seemed to realise that she must

keep quiet and still, and not give vent to the joy that she felt at being once again in the bright sunshine.

At last Mishima was rested, and again took up her little charge upon her back, and set out bravely on her way through the remaining wood till she reached the road which, winding round the base of the hill, led, she supposed, in the direction of Kin-shiu.

The road was one of those half-made tracks of reddish brown earth, muddy in the wet season almost beyond belief, and in the summer-time rough and painful to walk upon owing to the ruts and holes with which it was corrugated, so Mishima made comparatively slow progress along it, although she hastened as fast as she could, fearing every moment lest she should be pursued.

She had got four or five miles along the road, which for some time had left the base of the hills and now ran almost straight across an intersecting valley between the rice-fields, when she happened to look back. In the distance she saw two figures advancing along the road; as yet in appearance scarcely bigger than flies, but her keen eyesight enabled her to recognise them as two men. Something told the little maid that these two dots upon the distant road were her pursuers. With a terrified and sinking heart, and perhaps because of it, she struggled along with greater difficulty than ever. Almost every yard Rosamund appeared to grow heavier, and yet more heavy, till at length, when the road having crossed an intersecting valley once more skirted the hills, Mishima was forced to sit

down and rest, even though the two dots upon the road in the distance seemed almost each moment to become larger and larger as they advanced.

Ere the little maid felt that she could once more set out on her way the two men (for such they proved to be) were half-way across the straight piece of road in the valley, and within a mile or so of where Mishima and Rosamund sat.

They had long ago caught sight of Mishima, although at that distance they could not be certain that she was carrying anything, and were unable to distinguish Rosamund. When Mishima had turned the corner of the road after crossing the valley the two men hastened on, fearing lest, now there were woods close at hand, she might, after all, escape them.

As Mishima sat just a few yards up the hill-side to where she had struggled, ere sinking down on the ground with fatigue, her childish mind was busy trying to puzzle out some mode of escape from the pursuers who were now so close upon her. It did not take her long to realise that to go on farther with Rosamund was impossible, and could only result in the recapture of both.

Her only chance, indeed, seemed for her to conceal Rosamund somewhere in the wood above where she was sitting, and then trust to luck to elude her pursuers, or even draw off their attention from where Rosamund was. So after a few minutes' rest she struggled a couple of hundred feet up the hill-side, and suddenly came upon one of those strange cavernous nooks which are so often found on

the volcanic mountain-sides in Japan, and are by the superstitious supposed to be the abodes of spirits. The entrance was overhung with ferns and brush-wood. Though out of it in winter-time a tiny stream gushed, it was now quite dry, and so she decided to hide Rosamund in it, and then descending the hill once more to try by skirting along its base, still in the woods, to elude her pursuers, or at any rate to draw them away from the spot where Rosamund was hidden. Fortunately, the latter was already very sleepy, and so when Mishima placed her in the little cavern and told her to go to sleep she closed her eyes almost immediately.

Then Mishima, once more descending the hill-side, hurried through the thicket parallel to the road below as rapidly as she could. Fortunately, when the men had captured her at the Mission House she had been wearing a pair of straw sandals, and not her *gheta* (wooden clogs), and so she could walk rapidly, and her feet were somewhat protected from the stony path and the briers which lay in her way. But as she plunged through the undergrowth the thorns wounded her hands and face so that streaks of blood disfigured the latter, and sometimes the big brambles almost tore her thin *kimono* from off her back.

At last she had put several hundred yards between herself and the spot where she had abandoned Rosamund. She could hear the voices of the men below her, who were evidently hurrying along the road, and as the latter suddenly swept a little sharply into the hill-side, thus bringing her almost immediately above it, she could hear the men discussing

whether she had gone along the road or had entered the woods and was in hiding. Evidently they realised that to search the woods would probably result in a waste of time, and if Mishima had really gone along the road to do so would only give her a longer start and a greater chance of escape.

"We had better warn Tsunetaro and Kameya," said one of the men, "that our captives have escaped us. Then we can return with our companions, and will soon succeed in finding where they are hidden."

"*He! Kashkomarimashta*," said the other man. "You speak words of wisdom."

And then the two hurried along the road which led to the tea plantation, now at a distance of but half a *ri*,[1] of which Villiers was manager.

When the two men had disappeared in the distance, and little Mishima thought that the coast was clear, she came out of the wood on to the road, and, all the while keeping a sharp look-out for them, hurried along it in the same direction the men themselves had gone. To do this was a risk; but there was no other course for her to pursue if she were to reach the Mission House in time to give warning of the threatened attack, and to enable the Senkyōshi San and his friend Villiers San to return with her and rescue little Rosamund. To go by the mountain path, which struck into the hill-side about a mile farther along the road, would necessitate not only a toilsome ascent of more than a thousand feet, but also a very wide detour, which would mean that,

[1] A mile and a quarter.

already fatigued by her exertions, she would have so great a distance to traverse ere reaching the Mission House from the other side of the range of hills, on the slope of which it stood, that she could scarcely hope to do it that day.

The heat of the sun was very great as Mishima toiled along, keeping her eyes on the look-out for her captors; who, however, had hurried so rapidly back to Kin-shiu that they had long ago disappeared over the crest of the rising ground across which the road climbed towards Villiers' tea plantation. When Mishima herself reached the same slope and gazed down at the latter, and the narrow thread-like road which stretched in front of her towards the bend in the hills round which Kin-shiu lay, no one was in sight save a few coolies working in the rice-fields far down in the valley and some tea-pickers on the hill-side.

For a few moments Mishima paused, not only to get her breath, but to decide in her troubled mind whether it would be best to go down to Villiers San's bungalow and warn him, or to hurry forward with as little delay as possible to the Mission House. At last she decided upon the latter course; for she was afraid, in her present condition of distress, to attract attention to herself unnecessarily, lest some of the workers upon the tea plantation should give intelligence of her having passed that way, in the event later on of inquiries being made by those who sought to recapture her.

So after resting for a few moments she hastened along the road at as rapid a rate as her tired limbs

and faltering feet would let her. As she came to the gateway of Kambara's garden Kusatsu San, whom she happened to know slightly from having seen her once or twice at the Mission Hall, was standing just within the garden.

Mishima was about to pass by, and indeed so dusty and dishevelled was she that Kusatsu San would certainly not have recognised her had her heart not been touched by the sight of the torn clothing and blood-stained face of this girl who was about her own age.

As she gave the usual salutation from where she stood above the road, looking over the bamboo fence, Kusatsu San glanced narrowly at Mishima, and as she did so thought she recognised something in this distressed little figure that was familiar. And then, as Mishima answered her, she knew who it was.

"*Tomare! Doku maru?*"[1] she said. "Do not my eyes see Mishima, the servant of the Senkyōshi San?"

And then Mishima, seeing that she was detected, turned her face to that of O Kusatsu San and cried out:

"It is I, Mishima, the servant of the Senkyōshi San. Give me, I entreat you, something to drink."

As the girl stumbled up the short flight of steps which led to the gate Kusatsu San hastened to open the wicket and draw her inside. In her tender heart there was a great pity for this girl who seemed to be so weary, and to have been wounded, and beyond all that there was a natural curiosity to know what had

[1] "Stop! Where are you going?"

befallen Mishima that had got her into so sorry a plight.

So Kusatsu San gently led Mishima up to the house, where Kambara, her father, was sleeping soundly, as was his custom in the late afternoon, and gave the girl both to drink and eat. Then she heard as much of the story of the capture of Rosamund and herself as Mishima could find it in her heart to say, knowing as she did that every moment she tarried on the road might mean danger to the Senkyōshi San and O Ku Sama she loved so well.

Kusatsu listened to Mishima's recital with widely opened eyes and a terror-stricken heart. For did not the danger to the Senkyōshi San of which Mishima had spoken also mean danger to her Villiers San, who was, she knew, at the Senkyōshi San's, for she had not seen him return on his way back to the plantation since the night before, when he had passed her father's house on his way back towards Kin-shiu in company with the Senkyōshi San, his wife, and the white-faced English girl whose presence seemed to her a menace of ill. And when she had gone down to the edge of the plantation early that morning, as she sometimes did, for the mere joy of seeing her Villiers San come from the bungalow and go about his work of inspection amidst the tea-fields, he had not come forth, and so she knew that he must still be at the dwelling of the Senkyōshi San.

How could she do anything to save the man she loved? That was the question that beat itself into

her brain and kept throbbing there long after Mishima had departed along the road on her way back to Kin-shiu, refreshed and comforted with the food that she had had and the sympathy of Kusatsu San.

How could she, a weak girl, answer it?

CHAPTER XV

THE ATTACK ON THE DENDŌ KWAN

AS Evelegh anticipated, the visit of himself and Villiers to the Sonchō had been productive of little good. The latter was an ignorant man, who had attained to his position chiefly on account of an over-bearing manner and the possession of considerable wealth—that is, considerable as things were at Kin-shiu. He had scarcely disguised his hostility to the Senkyōshi personally and to his teaching, although his hatred was in a measure covert. Katada's ignorance of anything save his own business and the restricted life of the little town over which he was head, was such that Evelegh found it impossible to make him understand that redress for the outrage upon his home must be forthcoming sooner or later, and if the latter, then possibly in a manner which would be unfortunate for, and even disastrous to, Katada himself.

To all Evelegh's and Villiers' arguments he addressed the same stolid assumption of ignorance of the matter upon which they sought his assistance, and also disbelief in their story of Rosamund's abduction.

"It is nothing," Katada remarked carelessly. "The child will return, O Senkyōshi San. She is but playing in the woods, maybe. Or perhaps the maid you say was in charge of the child has taken her to see some relative. What, after all," he continued with callous indifference, "is a girl-child the more or less? Go home, O Senkyōshi, and see if she has not returned. I cannot assist you. It is a strange tale you bring to me. Besides, I know nothing of the men concerning whom you make complaint." Then he added, as though by an after-thought, "If you speak the truth concerning the letter you say you have received, why not take the good counsel contained in it, and leave a town and people that evidently do not please you, and go to Yokohama, where you are told you will find your child. I know nothing about these matters," he continued, "but in a moon, if the child has not returned, come again, and I will see what can be done."

It was with a heavy heart that Evelegh returned, in company with Villiers, to the Mission House, conscious that he had little that could bring hope or comfort to Eileen.

All the day they sat puzzling over Rosamund's disappearance, cross-questioning Sekio—rather uselessly as it proved, for the man could tell them no more than he had already done—and hoping against hope that something would turn up that would either give them a clue to Rosamund's whereabouts or throw some light on the mystery enshrouding her disappearance, which would enable them to institute a search party and pursuit.

But nothing happened, and the slow hours of the day dragged on with leaden feet for the anxious dwellers in the Mission House, and none of those who were attached to the Mission Church came from the town to tell them any news, nor did Ito San return to report any discovery.

The sun was sinking rapidly behind the distant hills, and the blue twilight of the Japanese night was swiftly enveloping them, when suddenly, as Evelegh and his wife, Myra, and Villiers were sitting on the veranda, they heard evidently laboured footsteps coming up the road from the town, and the click of the wooden latch of the little wicket leading into the garden.

Both Evelegh and Villiers jumped up, and the latter instinctively slipped his hand into his pocket, and drawing out his revolver, held it up his sleeve.

In the light which streamed out from the room, the *shoji* of which were pushed back in their grooves, one could see Eileen's face lose the little colour that it had, as she started upright in the lounge-chair in which she was sitting, and grasped the cane arms of it tightly with her hands.

A moment or two later the small figure of a young girl, clad in a smoke-blue *kimono*, which was torn almost to rags, and with her little face showing a ghastly yellow-white beneath the stains of travel, came staggering up the path, and thence on to the veranda, falling at Eileen's feet, who had risen with a cry of astonishment and alarm.

It was Mishima! But where was Rosamund?

The girl was speechless with excitement and

fatigue. Her black hair, usually so carefully and beautifully done, was disarranged and tumbling in dark, coarse masses over her shoulders and face, upon the latter of which were marks of blood, as though she had been wounded.

For a moment neither Evelegh nor Villiers seemed to quite realise who it was, although Eileen, immediately her eyes fell upon the little figure ere it reached the veranda, knew that her little maid had returned. When Villiers realised who she was he felt that some tragedy was about to be unfolded, and he muttered under his breath, "Good God! what can have happened to baby Rosamund?"

Evelegh disappeared into the house, and a minute or two later returned with a glass of water, some of which he dashed on to Mishima's face, whilst holding the glass against her bloodless lips.

It was several minutes before the little maid recovered consciousness and opening her eyes, from off which Eileen had pushed the straggling hair, exclaimed in a weak voice, "*Samui gozaimas*" ("I am cold") adding, after a pause, "*Doshtu?*" ("What is the matter?") Then, realising where she was, she burst into tears, and trembled violently.

It was not until Eileen and Evelegh had lifted her into one of the chairs, and the former had chafed her hands and bathed her face that any coherent words could be got from her. After a few minutes of tender comforting by Eileen and kindly words from Evelegh, Mishima sat up, and, gathering her torn and ragged *kimono* around her and across her shoulders, from off one of which it had been

completely torn, said, "O Ku Sama, and you, O Senkyōshi San, what must you think of me that your child, the beautiful Moon-faced one, should have been stolen whilst you were away?"

And then she wrung her hands and went on, "I could not save her, for Tsunetaro and Mitiki and the rest were too strong for me, and though they dragged me away with her, they threatened to kill me if I screamed or made any noise."

"Tell me, only say that my baby is alive!" cried Eileen pitifully, with a sinking at her heart lest Mishima's dishevelled and travel-worn appearance and the blood upon her hands and face might mean that harm had happened to Rosamund.

"She is well, O Ku Sama," said the little maid, "but far away. And I have travelled by night to reach you, and to take you to her if it be possible. But I did not escape easily, as you see," and she held out her hands, which were torn with brambles, and pointed to a cut at the side of her head which was swollen and discoloured, and appeared to have been made by some blunt instrument. "And now I have come away perhaps they will find and remove the little one to a new hiding-place farther amid the mountains. But there is no time," she continued, as though suddenly remembering something, "to talk of these things now, for as I crept through the town I heard much talk of the men who are coming as soon as it is dark to attack the house, and perhaps to kill you, O Senkyōshi, you, O Ku Sama, you, O Honourable Aunt of the Moon-faced one, and you, O Villiers San."

Exhausted by the effort of speaking Mishima fell back once more unconscious in Eileen's arms. The news that she had brought was indeed serious, and Evelegh and Villiers exchanged rapid glances, though they said nothing for the moment. There was no reason to disbelieve what Mishima said she had heard. Not only did the events of the last few weeks give colour to the statement, but the manner and attitude of the Sonchō that morning told them that were any serious attack made upon them no assistance could be looked for from him.

Whilst Eileen and Myra were trying to revive unconscious Mishima, Evelegh and Villiers stepped outside on to the veranda.

Villiers was the first to speak.

"This is going to be very serious, Evelegh," said he, "and it looks as though the covert hostility of the past two years was going to break from a smouldering into a blazing fire."

"What do you advise?" said Evelegh, after a moment's pause; adding, "It would be, of course, impossible to hold this fragile house against any serious attack made upon it."

Villiers glanced round at the paper walls and fragile woodwork of the house, and smiled at the mere idea of attempting any defence of such a building. Then he said, in reply to Evelegh's question:

"Impossible, of course, to think of defending this place, and the schoolroom in the garden is little better. There is no time to be lost, too," he added, "because it is almost dark, and as soon as night

falls, unless Mishima is entirely at fault, we may look for the coming of the rascals, who will like nothing better than to cut the throats of all of us, even if nothing worse happens to your wife and her sister.

For a moment or two neither of the men spoke. Inside the house, in the complete stillness of the evening, they could hear Eileen and Myra talking quietly and Mishima's feeble voice evidently answering questions.

At last Evelegh said, "The best thing for us will be to go down to the Dendō Kwan, and if there should be any attack some one must try to get on the telegraph to the Senchō at Nikko, who has always been level-headed, and is favourable to foreigners. Sekio is pretty well all right again, and could be trusted to gather together all the Christians and bring them to us. If there is to be an attack, it will be an attack upon our faith as much as upon us personally, and then the native Christians will need as much protection as we do ourselves.

Villiers was silent for a moment or two, as though he was thinking out the situation carefully, and then he said, "I agree with you, Evelegh, that it will be the best thing to do. We could hold the Dendō Kwan for a very considerable time against such a rabble as is likely to be brought against us. I suppose you have plenty of revolver ammunition, and also some for the guns? It would be hopeless for me to attempt to get back to my place to get any."

Evelegh said quietly, "Yes, I have plenty of ammunition, but I never thought that I should be

called upon to use it offensively, even though in defence of myself and my dear ones."

Villiers said nothing beyond, "If we are attacked, you will have to fight like any one else, old fellow, and it will be in a good cause; but let us hope that it may not be necessary after all. There is no time to be lost; we must get down to the Dendō Kwan and put it in as good a condition for defence as possible."

"Luckily," said Evelegh, "Okite has not yet gone, and his boy can be relied on. He is a strong fellow, and will be useful to carry down some things to the Dendō Kwan."

As the two men turned to re-enter the house they heard sounds of hurrying footsteps coming up the road and echoing against the rocks of the hill-side. Could it be the advance-guard of those who were about to attack them? But a moment's thought showed them that it was little likely that any one approaching with evil intentions would thus announce their coming. Once more the little wicket-gate clicked sharply in the still night air, and a moment or two later three figures came hurrying up the path to the house, scarcely distinguishable in the twilight. They proved to be Mi-Kama, Ito, and another Japanese who had professed Christianity.

Very hurriedly they told their story, Ito saying to Evelegh:

"And we, O Senkyōshi San, have waited not a moment, but have hurried up the hill-side to warn you of the danger which immediately threatens."

Then Evelegh, having thanked them, explained

rapidly what they had decided upon, and the three men volunteered to stand by them and help them carry down the hill stores and ammunition for the siege, should such a thing take place. Fortunately, Evelegh had been in the habit of keeping some stores of tinned provisions and other things in a kind of outhouse attached to the main building, where such things were sometimes placed on arrival from Nikko or Yokohama until a favourable opportunity occurred of transporting them to the Mission House on the hill-side.

A quarter of an hour later the little party, consisting of Evelegh, Eileen, Myra, Villiers, Mishima, Sekio the cook, Okite the gardener, Mi-Kama, Ito, and his companion, set forth down the road to the town, carrying with them all available ammunition, Evelegh's revolvers, his rifle, and sporting-gun, and a few provisions, their portable valuables, and a few other articles which were likely to be useful.

As Eileen passed through the beautiful garden which was so great a joy to her, and upon which she had lavished so much time, care, and thought and the gate in the bamboo fence swung to behind her, she burst into tears as the thought whether she would ever see that garden and home again came flashing into her mind. Evelegh put his arm round her for an instant and spoke as cheerfully as he could. But he himself was wondering sadly what would happen to the home they were thus abandoning.

As they turned the corner of the road it became evident that there was something astir in the town. Instead of the almost complete silence which usually

enwrapped it at this hour, when darkness was just descending, there was a stir, and the hum as though of people gathering together.

Villiers heard it, and said quickly to Evelegh:

"We had better hasten." And although Mishima was weak and partially lame so that she had to be supported on either side by Sekio and one of the other men, they almost ran down the hill-side in an endeavour to reach the Dendō Kwan with as little delay as possible.

As they turned into the narrow street which led from the hillroad directly to their place of refuge, they saw at the far end of it a crowd of people advancing with lanterns and torches, and the noise of conflicting voices was borne towards them on the night wind. Fortunately, the Dendō Kwan was nearer the end of the street which Evelegh and his party had entered than it was to the advancing rabble. But a few of the latter, on catching sight of the Senkyōshi and his friends, broke away from the main body and came hurrying towards them.

Evelegh exclaimed, turning to his wife and Myra, "You two must make a rush for it; here is the key of the gate. We will try to hold them at bay until you and the others with the stores get safely inside."

Villiers, drawing his revolver, and seeing that he could easily get at the spare chamber which he had loaded, and also a handful of loose cartridges, said to Evelegh, "I will run on ahead, old man, and hold up these beggars till the girls are inside."

"I am coming with you," replied Evelegh. He did

not, however, draw his revolver, although it hung in its leather pocket at his side, but grasped in his hand a heavy oak 'plant' that he had brought with him from England, and generally used as a walking-stick. If that broke, he thought, he could then use his revolver and do what was forced upon him, but until his stick failed him he could not bring himself to turn a deadly weapon upon people that he had endeavoured so earnestly to befriend and teach.

With just a momentary grasp of his wife's arm, a nod to Myra, with the words "Make a rush for it, girls; we shall be back with you in a minute or two," he hastened after Villiers, now a hundred yards away down the street, and almost within revolver-shot of the advance-guard of the enemy.

Long ere he reached his friend the latter had discharged his revolver several times, firing high at first in the hope of stopping the oncoming mob, and perhaps holding it in check for a time without bloodshed. But the men who had plotted the attack upon the hated preacher of the Jasō kyō had plied many of their supporters not only with *saké* but with the peculiarly vile and maddening brand of cheap whisky which the proprietors of one or two drinking-dens obtained from Yokohama, so that although for a moment the onrush was checked, it was only for a moment, and then with fierce cries they came rushing towards Villiers and Evelegh, brandishing their weapons, which were chiefly swords and pikes, whilst some of those behind who were in possession of firearms discharged these ancient weapons with so reckless a disregard of those in front that two of

their companions were hit, although Evelegh and Villiers both escaped injury.

It was not till the first two or three men were within some thirty or forty yards of Villiers that he opened fire in earnest. He was a splendid revolver-shot, for he had spent much time in practice during leisure hours upon the plantation, where there was nothing much else to do.

Two of the nearest men, who were hit in the legs, came down with a crash in the street, and for a moment those in advance of the main body stood stock still, as though considering what they should do. Both Evelegh and Villiers used that instant to glance behind and see what had happened to Eileen and the others of their party.

They had all reached the gate of the Dendō Kwan, and some one with trembling fingers was trying to fit the key in the lock.

Half a minute later, just as the men whose advance had been checked by the fall of their companions recovered confidence, the gate swung open and the fugitives passed inside.

This fact had, of course, not escaped the observation of the attacking party, and the latter raised a great shout of rage, and cried out to their companions to hurry forward. The half-score of men who were still in advance of the main body started to run once more, whilst the rabble at their heels, though struggling forward in too compact a mass to advance at any great pace, yet narrowed the distance which separated them from their more daring comrades.

Again Villiers fired, but this time the leading man

was missed and only one other was hit. Loading afresh, however, Villiers soon stopped three others in their career, but the leader rushed at Evelegh brandishing a huge curved sword, and making a vicious downward cut as though to cleave him from the shoulders. Evelegh had not learnt single-stick play and fencing for nothing. Jumping aside, he swung the oak plant which he held in his right hand in the air, and brought it with a terrific crash down upon the Japanese's right shoulder. The bone cracked, and the sword fell from the man's fingers with a ringing sound upon the stones of the road, and the injured man spun round screaming like a wild beast. Then, as Villiers fired six shots rapidly in succession, nearly every one of which found its billet, and the effect of which was to cause the mob to suddenly stop, the two Englishmen turned and rushed as fast as they could for the gate of the Dendō Kwan.

As soon as they turned the mob uttered a terrific cry, as though of triumph, and surged forward in the street, trampling upon their companions who had fallen, and hastening at the best speed they could make towards the iron gate, which at that instant swung to with a clang, and told them that for the moment, at all events, their quarry had escaped them.

When Evelegh and his companion reached the building itself, after having locked and bolted the gate, they found Sekio on guard outside, and on entering the Hall Evelegh saw that the rest of the party had not been idle even during the comparatively few minutes that had elapsed between their entry and that of himself and Villiers. The shutters to the long,

narrow windows had been swung to and fastened; the back door leading through the vestry had been secured; and the rest of the party were hastily piling up forms and packing-cases against it, the latter having been taken from the storehouse at the back.

Securing the front door, and as quickly as possible piling into the little lobby all available objects which would strengthen the door, and in the event of it being burst in would hamper the movements of the attackers, then Evelegh, Villiers, and Sekio retreated into the building, and held a hurried consultation.

Although both Eileen and Myra were very pale neither of them showed any trace of fear or nervousness. As Evelegh and Villiers came in through the door Eileen simply ejaculated, "Thank God, they are safe!" and hurrying to meet them asked whether the attacking party was inside the gate.

"Outside at present," replied Evelegh, "but a few moments, I am afraid, will suffice to put them in possession of the forecourt, and then if they really mean business they will not be long in making the attack. I think we can hold the place for some time, my darling," he said, placing his hand on his wife's arm, "and please God by then help may have come."

Although he spoke so hopefully he realised that assistance was little likely to reach them, unless by chance some one favourable to them in the town should wire the news of the occurrence to Nikko.

As Evelegh spoke these words Villiers was turning over in his mind the possibilities of the situation.

He, at all events, had little or no faith in any news being sent to Nikko with a request for assistance in quelling the attack.

Then the little party of the besieged set about the task of defending the building and their lives in grim earnest.

"You won't hesitate to shoot now," said Villiers, somewhat grimly, addressing Evelegh, "will you? You must see, old man, that it is a case in which passive defence will not be possible, or even justifiable. You must not forget the fate that will inevitably befall your wife, her sister, and Mishima if once those brutes rush the building and get inside."

Evelegh paused for a moment. He had been thinking all the time perplexedly of what he should do. But, fortunately, although he was a man who loved peace and not war, he was able in a crisis like the present to take a view of the situation guided rather by fact and necessity than by sentiment or predisposed notions. Indeed, it did not now seem possible to him to do otherwise than defend his own life and those of his wife, sister-in-law, and their native companions as vigorously and effectively as possible. So he turned to Villiers and said:

"I shall do my best, for the necessity of taking life has been forced upon me, and has not been sought by myself."

Villiers picked up the rifle and the sporting-gun, which Sekio had deposited in a corner of the hall with the cases of ammunition, and handed the gun to Evelegh, remarking, with an attempt at badinage:

"This weapon is less likely to do fatal injury, but may do even more good than the rifle in stopping an ugly rush. Perhaps you would prefer it."

Even in that grim hour, when the lives of all the party were hanging in the balance, Evelegh could not refrain from a smile at this consideration shown him by Villiers.

The two men ordered Sekio to carry some of the ammunition and place it beside the window which looked out over the forecourt.

"You had better remain below," said Evelegh to his wife and Myra, but both of them, speaking at once, asked that they might be allowed to come up into the gallery and do their part by loading the guns as they were fired.

"We shall be as safe there as down here," said Eileen; "safer if by any chance the enemy should succeed in effecting an entrance."

As they reached the gallery and looked out through the window they could see the mob, whose shrieks and howls alone were terrifying enough, hurling themselves against the railings and gate like wild beasts, urged on by two or three priests, by several of Yumoto Kameya's customers, and by Kameya himself.

A glance served to tell both Villiers and Evelegh that, substantial as the railings and door were, they could not long resist the weight of the assault made upon them. Indeed, hardly had the two men come to this conclusion than the door gave under the heavy blows rained upon it, and after a moment's pause, during which the mob, in its haste to enter

became wedged in the gateway, the fanatical band surged into the courtyard.

Villiers was for at once opening fire upon them, but Evelegh restrained him, feeling unwilling to commence hostilities, and indeed he had some lingering hope that the rabble would respect the sacredness of the building in which he and his companions had taken refuge. He said as much to Villiers, who, however, only shrugged his shoulders and laughed, having no faith in the Japanese, the priests, or in Kameya, who had been at the bottom of the attack.

Evelegh was not long left in doubt. For after a hurried consultation amongst those who appeared to have some authority and to be the leaders of the mob, a score or more detached themselves from the crowd in the courtyard and hastened to the porch, evidently to see if an entry could be forced there.

Neither Evelegh nor Villiers had the least fear of their succeeding in that direction nor at the back, for there had been sufficient furniture and lumber in the Mission Hall to successfully barricade and block both the porch to the front entrance and the little lobby at the back of the building. The only chance of entry was by one or other of the windows, if the shutters could be forced. But even here, so long as the defenders' ammunition held out, it was unlikely that an effective entrance in numbers could be made, owing to the narrowness of the windows, which would only permit of a small man entering, and only one at a time.

From the window Evelegh and Villiers could see the torches and lanterns fitfully lighting up the faces

of the besiegers in the courtyard. It was now quite dark, and but for the torches and lanterns they would have been able to see nothing.

Inside the Hall Sekio had already lighted the lamps, so that any one making an entry through the windows would be clearly visible to those inside.

For several minutes upon the stout oaken door of the Dendō Kwan a perfect hail of blows was delivered, which echoed in the empty building weirdly. Upon the back door also an attack was being made, and fortunately with a similar want of success.

Neither Evelegh nor Villiers exposed themselves at the windows except to get an occasional glimpse of what was going on, as they were by no means sure that some of the mob might not be possessed of fire-arms, which though of an antiquated type might possibly, quite by chance, do some injury.

After nearly half an hour's suspense, during most of which time the hammering on the doors went on almost without cessation, the attacking party evidently abandoned all hope of gaining an entrance in that way. There was a consultation again, and then it was evident that it was their intention to attack by the windows.

"Now," said Villiers, "the real business will commence." And he saw that the cartridge-chamber of his rifle was fully loaded, and that Myra had other cartridges to hand him as needed.

Fully half the crowd had now surged round to the right-hand side of the building, and after the glass in the windows had been broken and some tremendous blows dealt upon the shutters, the latter split almost

from top to bottom and immediately fell inwards in fragments. A moment later and a Japanese with a short, curved sword in his hand, attached to his wrist by a cord, appeared in the opening, struggling somewhat vainly to get through the window.

Villiers raised his rifle, but Evelegh put a restraining hand upon his arm and said, "Do not fire until the man actually enters."

"Very well," said Villiers reluctantly. "But the moment he gets past the half-way mark, and has effected an entrance, I am going to shoot."

At the same instant one of the shutters on the other side of the building fell in with a crash, and this time a slimmer man having been chosen to lead the way he had almost succeeded in pushing through the opening ere Evelegh and Villiers realised the fact. As, with a yell, the man was about to jump on to the floor Villiers raised his rifle, and amid the tremendous crash of the report the man spun round on the narrow ledge, shot through the chest, and fell heavily backward against his companions. At the same time the stouter man, who had been wedged in the other window, was pulled out again with a struggle, and a slighter one took his place.

"We shall be kept busy," said Villiers, once more raising his rifle and taking good aim, as the yellow face of another man bent forward as he was about to leap down into the Hall. Again the rifle cracked, and the man pitched head foremost, shot through the head.

These two fatalities seemed for a little while to take the heart out of the besiegers. They did not know,

and evidently scarcely thought, that the besieged possessed firearms other than their revolvers, and recognising that only one could enter the windows at a time, and that it was a tight fit to do that for any one save a small man, the besiegers began to realise that any entry by these means would be won at great cost.

As the rifle cracked the first time both Eileen and Myra had turned away their heads. It seemed horrible to them that any one could be calmly intent, as Villiers was, upon taking the life of a fellow human being. But Eileen, at all events, knew what would be the torture and fate which would befall her should once that howling, fanatical mob, goaded on by the priests who hated Evelegh and all his works, gain an entry in sufficient numbers to kill or overpower the men of the party.

Nearly half an hour elapsed after the death of the two first adventurous attackers ere anything further was done, and then suddenly they heard a noise as though something were being bumped against the wall near the window in the gallery at their back, and as Villiers stepped to the opening and looked out he saw that a ladder had been raised against the porch, the top of which was now resting on the parapet, and that men were attempting to ascend it.

"Give me my revolver, Myra," he said, unconsciously slipping out the name which he had so often used in his own mind.

Myra Helmont picked up the weapon from the form on which Villiers had placed it, with cartridges and other articles, and took his rifle from him.

"This will be quite good enough for these rascals

as they climb the ladder," he said, smiling grimly and shaking the revolver. "Please see that the spare chambers are filled, and hand them to me as quickly as you can. This attack is going to be more serious than that of the narrow windows."

Evelegh, grasping the situation at a glance, begged Villiers not to expose himself too much to the possible fire of any guns the attacking party might possess, and then said, "Do not trouble about the other windows nor about me. I shall not hesitate to shoot any one who attempts to jump into the Hall."

"Good," said Villiers, as he leant out of the window, seeing the top of the ladder tremble as though some one was ascending. A moment later and crack, crack went his revolver, and the noise was followed by two terrific yells from the men he had hit, who fell off the ladder into the arms of their comrades below.

For a minute or two no one was evidently bold enough to renew the attack, but at last three or four men, thinking that numbers and the speed with which they attacked might prevail, began to swarm up the ladder in the hope of reaching the window and jumping through it before Villiers could either change his weapon or slip in more cartridges.

Only one of them reached the top, and this man did so because Villiers had hit him just below the shoulder instead of in a part which would disable him. But as his head came over the edge of the parapet, taking good aim Villiers fired point-blank at him, and he spun round and pitched head foremost off the ladder on to those below. At the same time Evelegh's gun rang out sharply twice as two

men appeared in the aperture of the windows and were about to jump down into the Hall. Twice more Evelegh fired with equal success, for he was a very fair shot, and then, although the yelling and execration of the mob went on almost without ceasing, no one ventured either up the ladders or to climb in at the windows.

"I think they have had about enough of it," said Villiers; "at any rate for a time."

Eileen and Myra sat down on one of the forms in the gallery and covered their faces with their hands, whilst the acrid smoke from Villiers' revolver drifted in and mingled with that already fouling the air of the Dendō Kwan. Villiers sat just inside the window, and Evelegh, resting his elbow on the balustrade of the gallery, watched the two windows intently.

Then a moment or two after there came the report of an old musket or fowling-piece outside, and a small shower of slugs hurtled their way through the window, and striking the plastered roof of the hall brought down fragments.

"We shall have to be careful," said Evelegh; "they have evidently got hold of some firearms which may be deadly by accident, though I do not think that they are likely to injure us from the accuracy of their aim."

. . . . .

Then for at least an hour there was no great stir or movement amongst the crowd. Even the attack was very intermittent, and amounted to very little. Two more attempts were made to rush the side windows and ascend the ladder, but on each occasion

were repulsed by the deadliness of the fire which Evelegh and Villiers directed upon the attacking party.

Morning was breaking when suddenly Villiers, who had been looking out of the window as there had been no attempt at ascending the ladder for nearly an hour, saw advancing in the half-twilight of dawn what at first sight appeared to be huge and animated bundles of brushwood, but which in reality were faggots carried on the back in the peculiar Japanese way, by means of a wooden frame attached to the shoulders.

"Good God!" said Villiers, "they are going to try and burn us out."

Evelegh at this exclamation stepped rapidly to his friend's side and peered out.

Yes, there could be little reason for doubting the purpose for which the faggots were being brought. There were fully twenty men and women carrying these huge bundles, which were almost sufficient loads for mules or donkeys. They came on, and passing through the gate went round to the back of the Hall where there were several lean-to sheds made of wood. Nothing could be done. It would be fatal to open any of the windows at that end of the building, and to appear at them with a view of commanding the back of the building and of firing upon those who were placing the faggots.

Mishima and the Japanese were at the far end of the gallery, seated upon the floor trembling with alarm and wondering what would happen to them if the Senkyōshi and Villiers San should fail to shoot

straight and beat off the attack. And the faces of Eileen and Myra became even paler than before when they heard what Villiers said.

Help from Nikko could now scarcely reach them in time, and they would either be burnt like rats in a hole or would have to fight their way through the surrounding mob to some other building. To attempt the latter alternative, however, Evelegh and Villiers knew was but to court a speedy and horrible death.

CHAPTER XVI

HOW KUSATSU SAN SENT THE NEWS TO NIKKO

ALTHOUGH comparatively few of the inhabitants of Kin-shiu were taking an active part in the attack on the Mission Hall, there was a great restlessness in the town, and groups of those who, after the firing in the street, and seeing the execution that Villiers' revolver had done, had detached themselves from the mob, were standing about the corner near the *chaya* of Yumoto Kameya, ready for any mischief which might offer, provided it did not involve serious personal risk.

All the long afternoon Kusatsu San had been tortured by the thought of the danger she knew that Villiers was running, and by the knowledge that when night fell the attack of which Mishima had told her would be made upon the Senkyōshi's house, where she knew Villiers was.

She had no one to consult, no one to take into her confidence; for she scarcely knew how her father Kambara Kano would regard the proposed attack upon the Senkyōshi and his family, and should he either favour it or be indifferent to their fate, he

might perhaps prevent her from doing anything to save them.

All tender-hearted and loving little Kusatsu San knew was that she must save her good and great English lord at whatever cost to herself. Fortunate, indeed, was it for the beleaguered party in the Mission House that she had attracted the notice of Villiers, and had had the benefit of the knowledge of things outside her own sphere of life that he had imparted to her—at first, perhaps (as, indeed, he admitted to himself), to puzzle her and see her eyes open in astonishment, and afterwards because she was so apt a pupil that it was a pleasure to talk of such things to her. At the back of his mind had been even some faint and nebulous idea that if ever he married this dainty Japanese maiden, whose love for him was so humble and so obvious, that all he could teach her concerning the life that he led and the many things that these modern times were bringing into Japan from the peoples of the West, the greater chance there would be of happiness for them both.

Distraught by her anxiety, after Mishima had left her, it was impossible for Kusatsu San to concentrate her mind as usual upon the tending of her beautiful flowers which she loved so well or the other simple duties of the little household, which consisted of her father, herself, and two men gardeners.

So anxious in mind, indeed, was she that when Kambara awoke from his afternoon slumber he noticed it, and remarked upon it, and caused Kusatsu more than a few minutes' anxiety lest he should

question her more closely regarding the cause of her evident distress.

But Kambara contented himself by saying, "Is it because you have not seen the English *taisho*,[1] Villiers San, to-day that you look so sorrowful, my child?" And then when Kusatsu, taking advantage of the loophole of escape from further questioning which the remark afforded her, said, "Yes, my father; I have not seen him to-day," Kambara pursued the subject no further.

As the shadows of the blue night fell down into the valley, and Kambara retired to rest, first the *shoji* and then the *amada* of the little house on the hill-side were softly drawn back, and a slight figure, clad in a smoke-blue *kimono*, almost of the colour of the sky above, with feet shod with silent-treading *waraji*, crept through the opening, and having furtively pushed back the shutters into their place, crept quietly across the *engawa*, down the steps, along the garden path to the gate, and hurried away along the road which looked like a greyish streak and led to Kin-shiu.

Kusatsu had very little idea in her mind, as she sped towards the town, beyond the overmastering desire to do something to save her Villiers San from the fate which she had heard from Mishima threatened him. She had realised of late that he no longer regarded her in the light he had once done—before the coming of the strange foreign woman into whose eyes she had seen him smile. But he was still her Villiers San, a sort of superior being to whom in

[1] Overseer.

her single-hearted devotion she told herself no harm must be permitted to come. In her childlike mind there blossomed the beautiful flower of an unselfish woman's love, destined to fit and adorn her for the garden of Eternity.

She passed no one on her way along the road which skirted the base of the hills on the edge of the valley, for the peasantry of Japan go to bed almost with the sun, as they rise with it, and the few houses on the outskirts of Kin-shiu itself were dark and shut up, and it was not until the country road suddenly became a street of the town that she met any one. The two men she then saw, after throwing a curious glance at her as she sped silent-footed over the cobbles of the roadway, hurried on, and, turning a corner, disappeared down the main street.

As Kusatsu approached the town she had noticed a stronger reflection hanging over it than she had done at any time when she had been in Kin-shiu at night, save at the Festival of Lanterns. Long before she reached the outskirts her ears had caught the sound as though a large number of people were shouting and moving in the narrow streets. For her the noise held a menace which caused her face to blanch, and for a moment or two her limbs to shake and almost fail her. But she hurried on, and when the two men disappeared round the corner she realised that they were probably hastening to the spot from which the surging noise came, and so she turned to the right and followed them.

Now here and there in the houses on either side of the narrow street lights were seen burning, and once or twice she caught sight of heads, evidently thrust in curiosity round the corners of partly opened *amada.*

The noise of shouting and of a body of people in movement became much greater as she sped along, and when she turned into the long main street which led to the Mission Hall the hoarse roar of the mob suddenly burst upon her, and at a distance of a couple of hundred yards or so she saw a crowd of gesticulating people surging onward, away from her, shouting out threats, and words of encouragement to the bolder spirits who led, the meaning of which, however, she could not gather.

As she stood spellbound for the moment, and hesitating as to what course she should pursue, the voice of a woman at her elbow, who was standing outside one of the small shops, the door of which was open, said kindly,

"This is no place for you. The priests and many men have gone to attack the Senkyōshi and his friends, who have, some of them, I am told, shut themselves up in the Dendō Kwan, after they have already slain or wounded several of the priests' people."

Kusatsu said nothing for a moment or two, but stood horror-struck, realising with a terrible suddenness that she was too late to warn him she loved and his friends. Perhaps, indeed, too late to do anything at all to serve them.

The woman, who was of the middle class and of

somewhat superior intelligence, and the wife of an artificer in bronze, had received some kindness in the past from Evelegh and his wife, and she was not altogether ungrateful. So she said:

"By daybreak, alas! there will be no Senkyōshi, no foreign O Ku Sama, and no O Ba San, and perhaps even no foreign *taisho* of the tea plantation alive, for the priests and Yumoto Kameya, Tsunetaro Kuroki and his friends have sworn to kill them all. Those who could help are far away at Nikko, and who is there to send any word that they may come in time?"

Suddenly there came into Kusatsu's mind the memory that once her Villiers San had explained to her how messages were sent, by some mysterious means which she could not entirely grasp, from the little post office at Kin-shiu, where Matsu Uyeno, who was one of those who believed in the teaching of the Senkyōshi San, sat and sometimes tapped on a strange little machine, which made a noise something like the ticking of the cheap American clock which Villiers had given her that was such a joy to her at home.

But, unhappily, the little building in which the Kin-shiu Post Office was situated was at one of the corners of a street not far from the Dendō Kwan, and at the present moment was divided from her by the surging, shouting mob that was slowly pressing onwards towards its goal in the distance.

How was she to reach it?

That was the one question which formulated itself in little Kusatsu's mind, because the life of her Villiers

San must be saved, if it were possible, and it was she who must do this thing.

No thought of the great risk she would be running if she attempted to reach the post office entered the girl's mind. It was merely the difficulty of getting there at all that oppressed her heart and caused it to beat more rapidly.

She glanced at the woman at whose side she was standing, but she did not know for certain that it would be wise to trust her, and so she said nothing, only as a great wave of shouting swept up the street, "Listen, they are angry."

And then the sound of shooting, which was that of Villiers as he finally emptied his revolver before he and Evelegh took to their heels and fled to the Dendō Kwan, caused her to tremble violently.

"Come inside, child," said the woman, seeing Kusatsu's distress.

But the latter only shook her head, and then, as some men came hurrying down the street to join the mob at the other end, the woman said:

"Very well, I had better shut my house lest harm befall me," and Kusatsu was left outside alone.

For some little while she stood turning over in her mind what it was best to do, and then she remembered that there was a way round by Tera machi by which she might possibly succeed in outflanking the mob and reaching the post office, if not unobserved, at least without much difficulty. So after two men, who were flourishing sticks and short curved swords, had hurried by, she herself hastened farther down the

street, and turning first to the left and then to the right ultimately reached the corner in the street where the post office stood.

It was closed, but neither the man who held it nor his clerk was asleep. The former had been keeping an official eye open lest injury should be done by the mob to the Government property under his charge. The latter, who though not a professed Christian had yet attended some of the Senkyōshi's services at the Dendō Kwan, could not rest because of his fear lest something terrible should happen to the man whom he secretly admired.

Just before Kusatsu reached the building Tomare Moru, the postmaster, had gone out to see what was going on, leaving Matsu Uyeno, the telegraph-clerk, alone. Kusatsu San, as she approached the post office, had noticed the presence of two or three men who stood talking at the corner of the street opposite, and who regarded her very narrowly as she approached the building and rapped timidly upon the door. All the while she stood there, which seemed an age, although it was but a few moments, sounds of fierce shouting were borne on the night-air, and across the low house-roofs could be seen the reflection of the rioters' torches and lanterns.

At last, however, the door opened slightly, and Matsu Uyeno asked in a low voice who it was without and what was wanted.

Once or twice Kusatsu San had been to the post office with her father on business, and she was slightly known to the man.

"It is I, Kusatsu, the daughter of Kambara Kano,

the florist," she said quickly. "Let me enter. The business upon which I come is urgent."

Then Matsu Uyeno opened the door cautiously, and Kusatsu stepped within, and it was hastily shut behind her.

Speaking rapidly and earnestly Kusatsu told Uyeno what had occurred and the evil that threatened the foreigners.

"You," she said breathlessly, "O Uyeno San, can save them if you will but touch upon that strange thing which tells the people in Nikko what you want. There is yet time, perhaps, for the soldiers to get here and save O Villiers San, the Englishman at the tea plantation of the Seven Waterfalls, and the Senkyōshi San and his wife and her sister."

For a moment or two the man, whose yellow face was pale with excitement, stood irresolute in the dim light of the little room which formed the strangely constituted office in which the telegraph instrument was placed and the postal business of Kin-shiu transacted. For several moments he hesitated. Why should he interfere with what was going on in the street in front of the Dendō Kwan? And if he did interfere, was it not possible that those who were so bitter against the Senkyōshi San and the Jaso kyō he taught would also become bitter against him, and possibly do him evil like they sought to do the foreigners? And then he remembered that he was a Government official, and that surely they would not dare to touch him; and with the thought official egotism urged him to defy the priests and their friends. Then he remembered swiftly that the

Senkyōshi San had given him many kindly words, and had helped him on some points of study which had enabled him to fit himself for an increase of salary.

Then, too, there was Kusatsu San—pretty little Kusatsu San—who stood there and pleaded so earnestly with him, and whose terrified face looked up at his with an appeal which touched his heart.

So, after a moment or two more of hesitation, he turned away, lit a paper lantern which was hanging from a hook in the beam just above where the telegraph instrument was fixed, and turned to touch the keys.

At that very moment there came a knocking on the door, and loud, angry voices calling, "Open! open! Open at once!"

Kusatsu gave a little cry when she heard them, for though there was nothing much in the words, the voices uttering them themselves were full of menace and portents of evil.

For just a fraction of time Matsu Uyeno's fingers rested without motion on the keys of the instrument. And then, as Kusatsu threw herself on her knees at his side, pleading for the message to be sent quickly along the wires to Nikko ere it was too late, was flashed a call for help for the beleaguered foreigners in the Dendō Kwan. At almost the same moment the door was burst in and a dozen men, their faces distorted with a rage almost approaching madness, and one or two of them evidently drunk with *saké*, and wounded, for there were streaks of blood on their hands and their faces, rushed into the room.

At the sound of the cracking of the woodwork Kusatsu San had fled behind the little counter-like barricade and had hidden herself in a dark corner of the inner room.

Matsu Uyeno stood with his fingers upon the instrument, at bay. His eyes gleamed with a fierce, untamable defiance. In his mind he was for the moment the Government. The intruders were dogs.

The leader of the men who had entered in a harsh, loud voice called upon him to say whether he had telegraphed the news of what was going on outside. And then, when Matsu Uyeno would not answer, the man came forward, accompanied by three of his companions, and the leader again asked him what he had done. And then, as he did not answer, the man said harshly :

"We know, because of your silence, that you have sent the news to Nikko. Do as I tell you and tap upon the thing that talks and tell them that there is no disturbance now, and that the noise you heard was but a crowd chasing a thief."

Partly because he was an official, and these were the scum of the town who threatened and commanded him, Matsu Uyeno declined to do what he was told, and ordered the men to leave the building at once.

But the ringleader, thwarted as he thought in his plan to stultify the message which he felt sure had been sent, struck Matsu Uyeno across the face with the flat of his sword, meaning, perhaps, only to slightly wound or stun him; but, whatever the meaning might have been, it was the signal for his more brutal companions to fall upon the defenceless man

and slay him as he stood. Matsu Uyeno sought to defend his breast with his arms, and with a small packing-case he caught up, but to no avail. The savage blows from the short swords of his assailants beat past his defence, and he fell with a gasping sigh, covered with wounds.

Behind the paper *shoji* of another room the wife of Tomari Moru, who had tremblingly watched the terrifying scene, sank to the floor unconscious, the noise of her fall unnoticed in the confusion.

Then, as though the leader had suddenly remembered something, he called out sharply :

" Where is the girl that we saw enter? It was she who brought the news, and she who got him "—and he glanced at the prostrate figure on the floor—" to send word to Nikko along the magic wires."

At these words the men hurriedly searched behind the counter and in every corner of the little office, which took not more than a minute for them to do, and then, passing into the inner room, with the lantern held high so that the light should fall well around, a moment later they discovered Kusatsu San, cowering in a corner behind a chest of merchandise.

Two of the men, seizing her roughly, dragged her from her hiding-place, and the lantern was held close to her.

" What have you done? " said the leader roughly. " Was it you who brought the news to him? " and he indicated with a glance the dead man whose body could be seen upon the floor through the *shoji*, which had been pushed aside.

Kusatsu San was silent.

In that hour of her extremity she remembered suddenly the words of the Senkyōshi she had once heard, which told her of One who had died willingly, not for friends or a lover, but even for those who hated Him. She also realised quite clearly that, whatever she said, the end would be the same, and so, actuated by two different motives, she said in a scarcely audible voice:

"What if I told? It is not right that the foreigners should be killed. And those who kill them will surely be punished."

This was enough for the fierce fanatics who held her roughly by each arm. They set upon her with brutal force, tearing her garments off her, and abusing her with fiendish delight, and, after they had done their worst, they were about to slay her there and then, but the leader bade his companions desist, when each of the men had given her a heavy blow upon the head with the flat of his weapon, saying:

"Drag her outside in the street and kill her there, if you like, and then, when she is found, they will think that it was done by accident, and not know who did it."

So Kusatsu San, nearly unconscious, struggling feebly and with her head swimming and her body feeling as though all strength had suddenly gone from it, was dragged through the room, past dead Matsu Uyeno, out through the splintered door, and into the street. There, under the dark blue sky, she was slain, the clothing which had been torn off her destroyed, her tender body mutilated with the fiendish

ingenuity of the religious fanatics who had killed her, and finally left naked in the street.

There she lay till daybreak, defaced, bruised, and covered with wounds, till some tender-hearted women, who had an unacknowledged love for the Senkyōshi San and the Jasō kyō that he preached, took it away, and gave it decent and tender burial.

CHAPTER XVII

ONCOMING DEATH

THE night had passed, and daybreak had come. In the sky floated exquisite fleecy clouds tinged with the rosy flush of dawn. Each moment the light grew stronger, and the watchers in the Mission Hall from the window above the porch were able to distinguish the movements of their enemies more clearly.

For some time the latter appeared to be doing very little, and it was clear, from groups of disputing men, that some serious difference of opinion had arisen.

Perhaps some of the more reasonable and less fanatical, thought Evelegh, were hesitating to proceed to such lengths as the burning down of the Mission Hall, and incidentally the roasting alive of him and his companions.

Every moment gained might bring help from Nikko nearer, if only the warning had been sent; but although the telegraph-clerk was known to be covertly favourable to the Christian faith there could be little hope of a message being sent spontaneously.

In the light of dawn, which was cold and grey, within the little white-washed building, the faces of Evelegh and his companions looked ghastly pale and worn. Eileen and Myra's eyes were heavy from the need of sleep, and ringed with the tell-tale blackness which comes from fatigue and pressing anxiety.

For a whole half-hour after the men and women had passed to the rear of the building with their burdens of faggots nothing was done, and there was little stir or movement in the courtyard. Only occasionally a shot was fired, or an arrow winged its way through one of the windows to hit against the roof or the end wall with a thud, serving to warn those within of the danger of showing themselves too frequently to the enemy.

Then, at length, there came into the courtyard two priests from the temple in Bungo-machi, who seemed to be angry at the delay, and set to work exhorting the mob to proceed to their work of attempting to burn out the besieged.

Soon in the rear of the building the anxious listeners could hear the crackling of the flames as faggot after faggot was fired, and in less than ten minutes one of the sheds at the back caught, and soon afterwards the gable at the end of the Hall took fire, and smoke began to percolate through the rafters and plaster into the building itself.

Evelegh and Villiers glanced at one another questioningly and apprehensively. What was to be done? They had been caught like rats in a trap, and the choice now lay between a death by burning,

and one perhaps quite as lingering and horrible should they fall into the hands of the raging mob outside, whose violence and hatred seemed to have been re-aroused by the sight of the crackling flames, and the knowledge that soon their victims would either be destroyed or delivered into their hands.

Villiers spoke first.

"What are you going to do?" he said in a low voice to Evelegh. "Stay here and be roasted to death, or make a dash in the hope that we may get through this mob into some other building, which we can hold for a little longer? As for the Japanese," he continued, glancing at their native companions, "they will simply kill themselves as soon as the mob breaks in, or if we fail to cut our way out."

Evelegh was silent for a moment, and then he said:

"It is horrible to think that there is no way of escape, but we must fight till the last. And when the end comes——" He paused and looked into Villiers' eyes, and the two men understood each other.

Evelegh could not bring himself to do what he knew Villiers would, but he grasped the latter's hand in thankfulness, knowing that ere the fanatical mob could gain possession of his wife and Myra, his friend would have put the two women beyond the reach of torture and insult.

Every moment the smoke grew thicker and thicker, rolling in under the rafters in black heavy clouds, and

fighting its way across the Hall in fantastic wreaths as it met the currents of the air from the open windows.

At last the moment came for decision. Evelegh turned to his wife and Myra, and addressing the former, said:

"We must get out of this, darling, and trust to win our way through. We cannot stay here to be smothered or burnt, or give up our lives without one more effort."

Then Villiers called out to the Japanese to descend with them from the gallery, so that they might as speedily as possible remove the barricade which they had placed within the porch to block the entrance.

The setting fire to the back of the building had caused most of the besiegers to retire into the rear of the courtyard to watch the result, and the noise which was being made by the mob gathered there was sufficient to drown that caused by the efforts of the besieged to remove the boxes and furniture which had been piled against the front door. At last the little porch was free, and the doors, which had been battered upon by the besiegers, fell partially open upon their hinges. Almost at the same moment there was a great roar as the flames finally engulfed the roof, and volumes of stifling smoke swept through the Hall and thence into the lobby, where Evelegh, Villiers, Eileen, Myra, and their Japanese companions were gathered for the final struggle with the enemy.

"The smoke, at any rate," said Villiers, coughing

"will serve to mask our sortie for a moment or two."

Then, commending the whole party to the care and mercy of God, Evelegh pulled aside the bent and battered bolt and swung the doors back. For a moment or two there appeared to be no one in the fore-courtyard at all, only a few recumbent figures, which spoke eloquently of the deadliness of Evelegh's and Villiers' aim when the window over the porch was being stormed. Then suddenly a shrill voice announced the appearance of the besieged, and at the same instant there arose the sound of hurriedly advancing steps along the street.

"More faggots for the fire," thought Evelegh, as he grasped his revolver firmly in his right hand and drew Eileen's hand through his left arm.

Round the corner of the building there came a straggling handful of men, armed with sticks and stones, but happily with no firearms.

Crack! crack!! crack!!! went Evelegh's revolver, and three of the men stopped short, spun round, and fell on to the stones.

At the same time a man with a two-handed sword, coming round the other corner of the building, made a vicious cut at Mishima, who was sheltering herself behind Eileen's skirts.

The sword fell and slightly grazed the little servant's shoulder, but at the same instant the man staggered backwards, shot through the heart by Evelegh.

Every moment more Japanese were swarming round the corner of the building, and making savage,

though somewhat half-hearted, attacks upon the little party who stood just outside the porch, with their backs to one of its walls. Villiers was not idle, and his revolver cracked almost incessantly as Myra passed the re-loaded chambers to him.

So fierce was the conflict, and so alert had all the small band to be, that no one noticed the sudden entry through the gateway of a mixed detachment of soldiers and police.

Two more of the attacking party had fallen, and a dash upon Evelegh and his companions was just being concerted, when the newcomers rushed into the rear of the mob, and, laying about them with staves and swords, caused a diversion.

Then, as the sun swept up into the sky over the roofs of the environing houses and seemed suddenly to send a golden stream of light into the courtyard, Evelegh and Villiers realised that these were no reinforcements for the enemy, but police and soldiers from Nikko or elsewhere.

For a few moments there was a fierce struggle between the fanatical mob and the soldiers, as the former lost control of themselves when they saw that their hated victims were going to escape. The fight, however, soon came to an end, and the disciplined troops and police prevailed, and although there were half a score or more of dead and wounded already added to those stretched on the stones of the courtyard, the rest of the rioters were driven slowly back towards the rear of the burning building.

. . . .

The lieutenant in charge of the troops, and the head police official came towards Evelegh and saluted him, then they slowly wiped their swords and then replaced them in their scabbards.

A detachment of the men, under the command of a subaltern, were engaged in clearing the court-yard of the rabble.

"It is fortunate, O Senkyōshi San," said the young lieutenant, addressing Evelegh, "that we have arrived in time. We had the message late at night that there was an attack upon the Mission Station here, and we have travelled fast. I trust that none of you have been hurt?"

It was not till then that Evelegh realised that he had been hit by one of the musket-balls fired at random during the mêlée which had followed the arrival of the troops, and Villiers, with a laugh, bound up his left arm, in which there was an ugly gash received from one of the Japanese in the final rush which was intended to overwhelm them.

"There is not much damage done," said Evelegh. "But I fear that the Dendō Kwan is doomed."

Already the roof of the building was burning from end to end, and beams and tiles were falling with continuous crashes into the interior.

"There is no chance of saving the building," said the Japanese officer; "but come, I am sure you must want food and rest. A dozen of my men will see you to your home and stay on guard there until I come. Some of these," he said, indicating the scowling rioters, who were being slowly driven into a corner of the courtyard, "may have to be shot or

beheaded before I am free to come and hear how the trouble arose."

Evelegh and Villiers thanked the officer, and then the former, slipping his arm through that of Eileen and calling to Myra, Mishima, and the rest of the little party to follow him, started, with Villiers assisting Myra, on their way along the street which had such tragic memories for them.

All the members of the little party of refugees were exhausted both in mind and body, and their progress in consequence was slow.

It was only when they were ascending the hill, and their minds were once again becoming able to think of the more ordinary things of life, that Villiers suddenly noticed a strip of her blue linen dress which was bound round Myra's arm. He stooped down and looked anxiously into her face.

Though she was very pale and weary she smiled back at him, and asked bravely:

"What are you looking at? It is nothing at all."

Villiers exclaimed anxiously:

"But you must have been wounded, and I knew nothing of it."

"It is really nothing," rejoined the girl; "but I think a partly spent bullet must have struck me in the arm, and it made a little groove just inside and slightly below the bend of the elbow."

Villiers knew that it was not the mere scratch that Myra pretended, but nothing could be done at the moment, and so, grasping her more firmly by her uninjured arm, he half supported and half led her up the rust-red road which climbed between the

cherry-trees and cryptomerias that dotted the hill-side.

Suddenly, just before they were about to pass round the last bend of the road which hid the Mission House from their sight, Villiers became aware of a patch of smoke hanging above them on the hill-side, and drifting in the gently stirring morning air amid the trees. He instinctively knew what that patch of blue-grey smoke foreboded. The whole scene that would burst upon them as they rounded the corner came before his mental vision, but he said nothing to Myra or his companions, but merely set his teeth hard and turned his eyes away from the girl, and looked ahead up the winding road.

Less than five minutes later, and as Evelegh and Eileen came in sight of the garden of their house, they both gave a cry of astonishment and dismay, which caused Myra to start and endeavour to hurry forward to where they stood with hands pointing to the place where their home had been.

Nothing remained of the beautiful, fragile house, with its wistaria-enshrouded veranda, its reddish brown and moss-grown roof, and its air of picturesqueness and beautiful simplicity but a few barrow loads of smoking and charred beams, with here and there a piece of twisted ironwork or some shards of crockery.

In the night, whilst Evelegh and his companions were defending their lives down in the little Dendō Kwan against that horde of fanatical rioters, a small party of men had climbed the hill-side, had entered

the house, and, after taking whatever valuables they could lay their hands on, had wrecked it with insensate rage and then set fire to the building.

Perhaps this destruction of their home, of the house which had sheltered them ever since they came to Kin-shiu, which had many pleasant and, after all, few sad memories, except for the loss of Rosamund, proved the greatest blow that they had received.

Eileen was weeping silently when Villiers and Myra reached her side, and on Evelegh's face was a look of stern sorrow.

The soldiers who accompanied them regarded the ruin with a stolidity which came of their Eastern blood and the military discipline to which they had been subjected; but the little subaltern, in whose charge the party was, expressed his sincere regret in polite and intricately complimentary language for the disaster which had befallen the honourable Englishman and his family.

There was nothing to be done, so far as the house was concerned; nothing to save, nothing to search for; but they could not return in safety to the town, so the subaltern told them, until his superior officer had entirely quelled the riot, and dealt out the summary justice which would be necessary to bring the excited populace under control.

Strangely enough, the little pavilion which stood somewhat away from the house at the back was almost uninjured. Its roof appeared to have been a little scorched by the heat of the burning dwelling, and some of the wooden panels of the outer walls seemed to have been fractured as though by reckless

blows; but that was all. It was in this that Evelegh, his wife, Myra, Villiers, and Mishima, who seemed more dead than alive with fatigue and by reason of her wounds, took refuge, whilst the Japanese sat upon the ground outside in the sunlight, on guard and alert against surprises.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ADVICE OF LIEUTENANT KIO-SAI

IT was nearly midday ere Lieutenant Kio-sai, in command of the troops from Nikko, made his promised appearance at the Mission House. The quelling of the disturbance and the dealing out of rough-and-ready justice to the rioters had not been an easy task. But the lieutenant was a singularly able young fellow, and soon sifted the contradictory evidence which was forthcoming regarding the cause of the attack upon the Senkyōshi San and his friends. The result was a row of headless corpses against the southern wall of the Dendō Kwan courtyard, and a growing desire amongst those who had taken part in the scenes of the night before and in the burning of the building to put as great a distance between themselves and the lieutenant and his keen dark eyes as was possible.

As Evelegh, still grimed with the smoke of powder and of the burning Dendō Kwan, with his clothes soiled and torn, on hearing the Japanese officer's voice, came out from the pavilion into the sunlight Lieutenant Kio-sai saluted him and held out his hand English fashion.

"All is now quiet in Kin-shiu," he said with a smile; "but I fear that it will be long before the mischief of this night can be entirely remedied, or forgotten."

He spoke English exceedingly well, almost idiomatically, and with very little accent; for he had spent two years in European travel, and that at a time when comparatively few Japanese left their own country for that purpose.

Evelegh did not reply for a moment or two. His heart was full of many things, and for him just then the future seemed dark, troublous, and obscured.

At length he said:

"I have to thank you, lieutenant, for your timely help, which came just as the last moments of my own life and the lives of those dear to me seemed to have been reached. Thank God, you were in time. But I have not yet heard how it was that you happened so to arrive."

"That is very simple," said the lieutenant in reply. "A message was telegraphed quite early last evening from Kin-shiu, asking that assistance might be sent as there was rioting, and you and your house had been attacked. It happened my company and I were twelve miles on the road at a village where we had been sent for the purpose of manœuvring, and received the message to come along here with any police we could pick up on the way as speedily as possible. It was only a matter of about twenty miles, you see, and we covered the distance just in time."

"A fine march," said Evelegh, with his eyes glistening.

The lieutenant drew himself up, and said quietly: "Not at all, Evelegh San." Adding proudly, "My men could do better than that at a pinch. The message, I find," he went on, "was brought to the telegraph-clerk by a girl, who seems to have heard of the intended attack, and to have journeyed in from her father's house along the Kin-shiu road leading to the tea-plantation of which your friend, Villiers San, is manager."

For a moment Evelegh scarcely realised to whom the speaker could be referring. But soon a light broke in upon his mind, and he said suddenly:

"Do you mean the daughter of Kambara Kano San, the florist? The girl's name is Kusatsu."

"That is the girl," said the lieutenant. "Do you know her?"

"Yes," said Evelegh; "well. But where is she?"

"I regret to say," said the little Japanese with solemnity, "that some rioters, suspecting that a message had been sent, evidently broke into the telegraph office, and, when they failed to get the telegraph-clerk to send another message, saying that all was quiet and that there was no attack upon you, they killed him, and, according to the wife of Tomari Moru, who saw a good deal of what occurred, though luckily unnoticed, finding the girl hidden in a corner of the inner room of the telegraph office, they killed her too. As you know her, I will spare you any details, only saying that her naked body was found outside the post office in the street and has been buried by some kindly souls. But her death was not a nice one."

Thus it was that Evelegh learned of little Kusatsu's heroic deed. For several minutes he was silent. Tragedy upon tragedy seemed to be pressing upon him with a terrible weight of accumulated horror. It had appeared to him of late, and since Myra's arrival, that Villiers had wavered in his allegiance to little Kusatsu San, but he knew that the death of the latter, with its horror and its heroism, could not fail to affect his friend very deeply.

After a minute or two he said quietly to Lieutenant Kio-sai:

"I must tell my friend what I have heard. Perhaps you will excuse me a moment. I know my wife and sister-in-law are still asleep."

And, turning away, he re-entered the building in search of Villiers.

. . . . . .

Ten minutes or so later Evelegh and Villiers came out from the pavilion together, the latter with a face paler and even more troubled than it had been after the night of stress and anxiety down at the Dendō Kwan.

A very few minutes' conversation that Villiers had with Lieutenant Kio-sai served to make it perfectly clear, without any possible doubt, that the girl who had succeeded in sending the message for help to Nikko was little Kusatsu San, and that she had fallen a victim to her devoted love. Whatever Villiers' feelings regarding Kusatsu San had come to be during the last few weeks, when he heard the story (now given by the lieutenant with more details than when he had told Evelegh) he could not control the

emotion which possessed him. It seemed impossible to him that he would never see again the dainty little figure and the bright and charming face which had always seemed to be watching for him along the road when he had either passed on his way to or from Kin-shiu.

At first his great desire was vengeance against those who had done Kusatsu San to death. It was a natural enough feeling; which was perhaps strengthened in its intensity from the fact that he was living amongst a people who, during the last twenty-four hours, had proved themselves to be scarcely above the level of savages. But Lieutenant Kio-sai explained to him that it was more than probable the murderers of Kusatsu San and the telegraph-clerk had been already punished, and that if it were not so they would be executed later.

"Besides which," added the lieutenant slowly, "none of you must remain long at Kin-shiu lest some harm should befall you, and I should be held responsible by my Government. Whether you return or not ultimately, who can say?" he exclaimed, shrugging his shoulders and raising his hands in interrogation, a trick he had learned during the six months he had spent studying in Paris. "Leave me to do my best," he continued, "to bring all those who have been guilty of any offence against you or against those who are connected in any way with you to justice; that is the only thing that you can possibly do."

Burning as he was with desire for the hunting down and punishment of those who had so cruelly

slain and maltreated the little daughter of Kambara Kano, Villiers was forced to see the reasonableness of what the Japanese officer said. And so, for the moment, the subject was dropped between them, and the great question of what was to be done in the future presented itself for consideration and discussion.

The problem which now confronted Lieutenant Kio-sai, as well as those he protected, was a very difficult one. Even if it could have been considered desirable for Evelegh, his wife, Myra, and Villiers to remain at the Mission House the destruction of it had removed the possibility. The Dendō Kwan itself was now a heap of smoking ruins. There was no safe place of refuge in the whole of Kin-shiu for the foreigners. The lieutenant speedily put his veto upon the suggestion made by Villiers that the whole party should go to his bungalow, and take up their quarters with him there until some other scheme could be evolved.

"Your hands on the plantation," said the lieutenant, "may or may not be reliable, and loyal to you. That I cannot, of course, say. But Evelegh San, O Ku Sama, and their honourable sister would not be safe for twenty-four hours after dusk had fallen if they were to go there. I have not got entirely to the bottom of this affair; but I know enough of the circumstances," he continued, "to assure me that for a long while to come it will be dangerous for foreigners, and most of all for those who teach the foreign faith, to reside in Kin-shiu or the neighbourhood. . . ."

Evelegh made as though he would dissent from this statement, but the lieutenant held up his hand to enforce silence, and, with a dignity singularly out of proportion to his stature, he continued :

" I know what you would say, Evelegh San, but I am right and in this you are wrong. The only thing I can suggest is that you and your family and those who are attached to you should go to Nikko, where at any rate you will be safe, and in a measure spared witnessing or knowledge of the punishment which my Government may see fit to inflict upon the people down in the town. It will be impossible to overlook the affair of last night. The most guilty have been dealt with," he said with a grim smile, " but there are others left, less prominent perhaps in the actual attack but not less to blame from that circumstance, with whom I shall have to reckon."

Both Evelegh and Villiers were silent for a few moments. They were thinking deeply of different matters. One of the work that he would obviously have to abandon, at any rate for a time, and the loss of his child. The other of little Kusatsu San, who had been so cruelly done to death and whose frail body had for a time lain mutilated in the street down in Kin-shiu, the butt of every obscene rascal who passed by. Neither had pleasant thoughts, although the regret by which they were actuated was dissimilar in character.

" I cannot leave thus," said Evelegh at last. " It is impossible. Do not think me ungrateful, lieutenant," he continued. " I shall never forget that we owe our lives to you and your men, and are so

deeply indebted to you that we can never hope to repay the debt. But although I accept your offer for my wife, her sister, and our little maid to go under your escort to Nikko, I at least must remain until I can learn something definite of the fate of my child, whom I hope it may now be possible to trace by means of Mishima and the information that she has given us."

Ever since a coherent account of her adventures had been obtained from Mishima both Evelegh and Villiers had been consumed with a desire to set out to find the place where Mishima had hidden the child ; but, of course, the events of the night before and the morning had entirely prevented their carrying out any such idea, and when the subject had been broached to the lieutenant down at the Dendō Kwan, ere they set out on their way to return to the Mission House, he had clearly shown them that, for the time being, it would be impossible to organise a search-party, and that the only thing was to leave the matter in his hands.

"I shall do my best," said Lieutenant Kio-sai in reply to Evelegh's remarks, "to recover your child for you as speedily as possible. But there are many things to be done—and believe me, you must leave these matters in my hands—for it would be impossible for you yourselves to act ; but go with the rest to Nikko, Evelegh San, you must."

Evelegh recognised that it would be useless to press upon the notice of the Japanese officer the claims of his work, or the fact that he could not, without a struggle, abandon the few converts he had

made to the Christian faith to the tender mercies of their neighbours, who doubtless would be more incensed than ever against the Jasō kyō and the adherents of it after their failure to destroy them, and the punishment which had already been meted out to their ringleaders. Lieutenant Kio-sai would understand nothing of this feeling, but the intense love of children is common to the Japanese mind as well as to the English race.

"I have heard the story," said the lieutenant, continuing, "of your child's disappearance, and although I have at present no exact knowledge of her whereabouts, it is quite possible that some of the men who were concerned in the affair may seek to make terms with me by giving her up, if she has been recaptured, which I, for my part, think more than likely. You may be quite sure that, when the men who were left in charge of Mishima San and of your child reached Kin-shiu and found that evidently they had passed by the little one and her guardian, they would return at once and search the hill-side at the point at which Mishima San succeeded in eluding them. What they would do in the event of finding the child it is not possible for me to say. But I think," added the lieutenant hastily, wishing to reassure his listeners, "that they would not injure her now for fear of the punishment which I should mete out to them. I will do my best to recover her speedily; but, first of all, and before I can undertake this work, I must be assured that you, O Ku Sama, your honourable sister-in-law, and those of your household for whom it would be dangerous to remain behind

are on their way to Nikko and safety. I would seriously urge upon you," continued the speaker, "that you do not seek to remain here providing, as it were, an element of discord, and a possible incentive to further violence. Believe me, you will the sooner see your little one, should she be alive, if I am left to negotiate her recovery unhampered by your presence."

Villiers had listened intently to the conversation, and here he put in a word.

"Lieutenant Kio-sai is right, Evelegh," he said. "Our only chance of recovering little Rosamund will be to go to Nikko and leave the lieutenant with free hands. I cannot believe that she is dead," Villiers went on; and then, as the lieutenant's attention was diverted for a moment or two to one of his men coming hurriedly up the garden path, he whispered: "I feel sure that Kio-sai has found out more than he is prepared to tell us, and also knows that Rosamund can be recovered on certain terms."

The lieutenant and the private he had walked down the path a few paces to meet stood engaged in earnest conversation. In two or three minutes the former returned to where Evelegh and Villiers were standing, with something approaching a smile upon his face.

He said, with perhaps excusable pride:

"I was right, Evelegh San, in my judgment; and, if you are prepared to adopt the course I recommend, and proceed with the greater part of my men under the command of Mr. Sasaki-sa, I have very little doubt that in a day or two I shall be able to return

to Nikko, having tranquillised the town, and with your child in my charge."

It was not easy for Evelegh to accept the proposal which was made. All the spirit of fighting ancestors —for in his family in the past for several generations there had always been distinguished soldiers as well as clerics—seemed to come to the surface, reinforced by the nobler spirit and a desire to stand by those he had taught, in the hour of their peril and trial.

"I must have a little while to consider the matter," he said quietly. "It is not easy, believe me, lieutenant, to abandon a post like mine, although it is difficult, perhaps, for you to understand. You fight with the sword of the flesh, and I with the sword of the spirit; but we are both soldiers, and, perhaps, after all, you can understand."

The soldier paused for a moment, instinctively raising his hand in respectful salute.

"It is not difficult," said he, "for me to comprehend what you say. I understand more than you think; although, perhaps, it is difficult for me to see with the eyes that you have in these things. As you say, no true soldier cares to abandon a position, however fiercely it may be attacked."

Whilst Evelegh, Villiers, and the lieutenant were talking together Eileen and Myra came out from the pavilion, having at last awakened from the heavy sleep of fatigue into which they had fallen on their return to the Mission House.

Naturally enough, the first inquiry of Eileen was for Rosamund.

"Have you heard anything of my little one?" she

asked anxiously of the lieutenant. "I am so fearful lest something should have happened to her. She is almost certain to have awakened long ere this, and is perhaps wandering alone in the woods where Mishima was obliged to abandon her; or may even have been recaptured by the dreadful men who carried her away. Please tell me quickly if you have heard anything. I would rather know the worst than be kept in such suspense as has tortured me the last two days."

"I am sorry," said the lieutenant very gently, gazing with admiration at the pathetic and beautiful face of the woman who looked down upon him from her superior height—a face that was beautiful, although it was marked with the stress of the terrible night spent in the Dendō Kwan and the stain of tears. "But I have no news at present of the little missing one. I have not been idle, however, and I have already despatched a small detachment to search the hill-sides between Kin-shiu and a point considerably beyond that where your servant Mishima says that she left the child, and I have little doubt but that before long I shall be in a position to restore the latter to you. Have confidence in me," said the little man, drawing himself up and making his lack of inches as little apparent as he could. "I am your most humble and sincere servant, O Ku Sama, and I will not leave a *tsubo*[1] of the country unsearched in my endeavour to find your baby for you."

Unsatisfactory in many ways as the lieutenant's answer was of necessity, yet Eileen could say nothing

[1] About four square yards.

further beyond thanking him for what he had already done, and assuring him of her trust that he would do his best in every respect.

Then there followed a discussion as to the lieutenant's proposal that they should all depart for Nikko as speedily as possible.

Both Eileen and Myra were brave women. Their conduct of the previous night had amply demonstrated that; and they placed their fate unreservedly in the hands of Evelegh, whose reluctance to abandon the work in which his heart and soul were bound up they could easily and perfectly comprehend. Neither of them said a word that could be construed into an entreaty that he should yield to the Japanese officer's arguments, or that indicated on their part a desire for a safety which, after the terrible events of the night before, would have been perfectly natural.

In the end Villiers, who saw the position of affairs from a more material standpoint than Evelegh could, threw his weight into the scale of Lieutenant Kio-sai's argument that at least for a time Kin-shiu was an impossible place for any of them to remain in with any degree of safety.

At last Evelegh himself was overcome. The lieutenant said:

"You are not abandoning a post; the post has been destroyed. There is no home for you," he added, somewhat brutally perhaps, but with irresistible logic. "Nothing but a few blackened and charred timbers, and this little pavilion in which it would be impossible for you to dwell with safety or comfort.

The Dendō Kwan itself, except for its stone walls, is destroyed. Months must elapse before your home and the latter can be rebuilt, for frankly I think that labourers, until this present very active hostility has had time to die down, will be hard to get, if not impossible. What is there to detain you?" he said, as he stood in the sunlight within a few yards of the smouldering heap of timber and rubbish which had once been the pretty Mission House, "except a mere sentiment which, however admirable in itself," and he saluted Evelegh respectfully, "is not practical under the circumstances. On the other hand, Evelegh San, if you take my advice and depart with your household for Nikko, if only for a time, there will be an opportunity of settling the matters which have arisen out of this lamentable occurrence, and perhaps it may be possible for you to return to the work in which it is evident your heart is so entirely wrapped up."

Evelegh, who stood listening to what the speaker had to say with a weary and dejected expression upon his face, could only admit, however reluctantly, that the argument of the lieutenant was absolutely true and incontrovertible.

Alas, as Lieutenant Kio-sai said, there was nothing to detain them. There was little left of their property save a few articles of furniture, which those who had attacked the place had apparently carried out into the garden with a view of removing them at their leisure. Perhaps some of the more valuable articles of jewellery and the considerable sum of money which Evelegh was always obliged to keep in the

house might be recovered, but of this there was no certainty. Packing there was none to do; beyond the things already mentioned they possessed nothing but the soiled and torn garments that they were wearing, and the weapons which had served them in such good stead the night before.

At midday, when the hill-side on which the Mission House had stood was bathed in brilliant sunshine which, cruelly sharp, showed up the devastation that had been wrought, Lieutenant Kio-sai triumphed, and Evelegh, sick at heart, consented to the proposal that they should start for Nikko early that same afternoon.

The lieutenant made his plans with the celerity which bespeaks an able and strong man. Thirty of his men were told off, under the command of Mr. Sasaki-sa, to act as an escort to Nikko. And shortly before three o'clock in the afternoon the little party, consisting of Evelegh, Eileen, Myra, Villiers, Mishima, and Okite, set off on their way down the hill-side, surrounded by soldiers, the two ladies in *kajos*, Evelegh, Villiers, and Mishima mounted upon three hardy mountain ponies, such as are generally used for carrying packs of merchandise over the hills to the various towns and villages, which the lieutenant had pressed into the service. Okite, in view of his wounds, was accommodated with one of the soldiers' small horses, which could be spared owing to the fact that its owner during the fight in Kin-shiu had been so seriously wounded that he was quite *hors de combat*, and would be for some time to come.

As the little party, with Lieutenant Kio-sai riding

at its head, passed through the streets of Kin-shiu, surrounded by the soldiers reinforced by a few local police who had either been too terrified or too supine to act on the previous night, a few stones were thrown, and words of execration hurled at the Senkyōshi and his friends by the roughest element in the crowd. But on the outskirts of the town, at which point the lieutenant left them, where the narrow street along which they had come suddenly entered on its way to Nikko between the rice-fields, quite two hundred people had gathered together, whose attitude was one of respect. Here even some signs of favour towards the departing foreigners were shown, whether by reason of real sentiments of friendliness and the memory of kindly actions done, or because of the presence of the soldiers it was not possible to determine.

Nearly half the distance to Nikko—through fertile country, impressive pine forests, up hill and down dale—was covered by sunset, when the village of Taio-nomo was reached and Mr. Sasaki-sa called a halt.

At the *chaya* of the "Fruitful Peach Tree" accommodation was found for Evelegh and his party, whose somewhat dishevelled appearance created a great deal of astonishment in the minds of the people of the village. But hot baths, and those skilful renovations to which the practised fingers of Eileen and Mishima, at all events, were accustomed, gave a much improved appearance of respectability and comfort to the party. And when the pleasant-faced wife of the proprietor of the *chaya* brought from out her stock of clothing

beautiful *kimonos* for Eileen and Myra, and a serviceable one of blue cotton cloth for Mishima, these three, at least, felt more happy and comfortable than they had done at any time during the last thirty-six hours.

A start was made soon after dawn, and the remaining distance which separated Taio-nomo from Nikko was covered at a leisurely but satisfactory pace, and, just as the sun was sinking horizonwards they entered the famous avenue of giant cryptomerias, which is the wonder of all travellers who come to the sacred city, and, under the curious gaze of fellow-travellers, and of the townsfolk who were promenading in the shady avenue, at length found their way to their friends', the Campbells', residence, where they were received with the utmost delight. News had already filtered through to Nikko of the rioting in Kin-shiu, causing the members of the small foreign colony in the city the greatest alarm concerning the safety of Evelegh and his friends.

Six days after the Eveleghs and their companions had reached Nikko, in the heat of the afternoon, when all the party were resting, Lieutenant Kio-sai, mounted on his tiny horse and accompanied by four soldiers, approached the Campbells' residence on the outskirts of Nikko, escorting a *kago*.

The lieutenant was a happy man that afternoon for he had succeeded in quelling the dangerous outbreak at Kin-shiu, and had meted out punishment to those concerned in the riot and attack upon the missionaries in a manner which had won him the commendation of his military superiors at Nikko, and the civil authorities as well. In addition to that,

he knew that he was about to add to the debt of gratitude that the foreigners owed him, and Lieutenant Kio-sai had, during his long sojourn in Europe and in England, learned to regard the foreigners, and more especially the English, with a certain degree of admiration for qualities of heart and brain which his own high standard of intelligence made him appreciate at their right value.

Making his way up the short path which led to the house through one of those quaint examples of landscape gardening which are the delight of the Japanese themselves, and the wonder and admiration of foreigners, he clapped his hands to summon the servants, one of whom appeared speedily and greeted the lieutenant with the most humble and respectful of salutes.

Asking first for the Campbells, on being informed that they were in the city, he said to the little maid who had greeted him :

"Then tell O Evelegh San and O Ku Sama, his lady wife, that I am here."

And then, as the girl hastened with tiny, shuffling footsteps up the stairs, along the veranda, and into one of the rooms of the house the lieutenant leant against the bamboo rail of the veranda itself to await the Eveleghs' coming.

A minute or two later Christopher Evelegh appeared, followed immediately by Eileen and Myra. Both of the latter were clad in the loose crêpe *kimonos* which they had donned for their afternoon siesta.

Evelegh glanced eagerly at the lieutenant's face, but the latter was a Japanese, and he had it under

perfect control. Little or nothing appeared upon it beyond the smile of welcome with which the Japanese invariably greet their friends, to prematurely inform Evelegh, Eileen, and Myra of the news that he bore.

"What news, lieutenant?" asked Evelegh, when he had shaken hands European fashion.

Even then the little man, who stood in the sunshine blinking his eyes lest they should tell too much, was not going to lose the great pleasure of the surprise that he had prepared for his friends. So it was not until after the usual polite inquiries concerning Eileen's, Myra's, and Evelegh's health and the answers to the same that he said: "Come and see," and, turning sharply, proceeded down the path lest he should, as he thought, spoil the effect by at this point disclosing the object of his visit.

Lieutenant Kio-sai, however, had not calculated upon one thing—the mother instinct which tells with such unerring certitude the presence of loved ones.

Eileen pushed hastily past her husband, with the light of joy shining, mingled with tears, in her eyes. She knew. And, with flying feet, she out-distanced the lieutenant—who was not to be hurried out of a due dignity of walk—thrust open the gate, stepped into the road, pulled aside the hangings which hid the occupant of the *kago* from view, and fell upon her knees in the dusty, sunlit road beside the peacefully sleeping Rosamund.

By the time Evelegh and Myra had reached the gate Rosamund was awake, strangely bewildered at first to see her mother, who seized her and clasped her

almost hysterically to her breast, while the tears fell like gems in the sunlight on to the child's fair locks.

The four soldiers looked on in stolid amazement. They understood little or nothing of the emotional outburst of the foreign woman, which was so unlike the stoical control of their feelings which their own women were generally able to exercise. The lieutenant, more accustomed to European demonstrativeness, turned away his head for a moment. Then he said, rather formally:

"I am glad, O Evelegh San, and you, most charming lady, to have been the means of restoring your little child to you. May I be allowed to say that you will be wise, indeed wise, if you never place her in such peril again?"

And then, scarcely allowing either Evelegh or his wife time to thank him, he saluted, and, giving the sign to his four men, he marched away down the dusty road towards Nikko with the *kuromaya* and the now empty *kago* swinging on the poles as the bearers tried to keep step with the soldiers.

The lieutenant had not stayed to tell of the two days' toilsome journey, and at first fruitless search, for Rosamund amid the mountains beyond Kin-shiu which he had undertaken on foot; nor had he mentioned the skilful strategy with which he had succeeded in approaching the house, far away from the original hut, where recaptured Rosamund was found shut up, and guarded by three or four ruffians in the pay of Kuroki, who had received instructions to kill the child at the first approach of danger.

The lieutenant had become acquainted with this

circumstance, and when he and his men at dusk crept silently upon the guard they had seized and overpowered them ere they could turn, and they now lay in the prison at Kin-shiu awaiting trial for an offence the Government recognised as serious, and one which, if unpunished, might even lead to international trouble.

All the story of the lieutenant's skilful conduct of the search came out some days afterwards, and then not through the lieutenant himself, but from a Government official, with whom Evelegh had an interview, who had heard it from one of the men who accompanied Kio-sai.

There was great joy in the house that night over returned Rosamund. Mishima, still suffering considerably from her wounds and the experiences she had gone through, was once more happy now her little charge, to whom she was attached with such deep devotion, was once more returned to her.

CHAPTER XIX

THE HOME-GOING

THE Eveleghs and Myra Helmont remained for some weeks in Nikko awaiting the final decision regarding their future movements. The European friends they had in the city all said the same thing and gave the same advice, and the Head of the Missionary Board in Japan agreed that it would be impossible for Evelegh to return and carry on the work at Kin-shiu for some long time, if ever. As for Villiers, he said that it would be madness; and at last Evelegh was forced to the conclusion that, whatever might be the ultimate result of the events of the last month or two, for some considerable time, at all events, his work would have to be laid aside. It was even thought desirable by the Missionary authorities that, owing partly to the great strain from which he and Eileen had suffered, and partly to enable him to lay the whole circumstances before the authorities in London, that he should return to England, and reluctantly he was at length brought to see that this would be the wisest course to pursue.

When this was decided upon, after a long discussion held one evening on the veranda of the Campbells' house, Villiers said sadly, addressing Evelegh:

"And I shall be left alone. Not that I fear the Japs; they won't touch me after the grilling that Lieutenant Kio-sai has given the rascals, but it will be terribly dull up at the plantation. You cannot think what your home was to me, and I shall miss it more than I can tell. It will be indeed far worse than if you had never come."

As they talked matters over, into the minds of all of those who had been dwellers at Kin-shiu there came the same thought, of little Kusatsu's death. Villiers had said very little concerning this terrible event, but both Evelegh and Eileen knew that it had left a mark upon his life. What neither Eileen nor Myra knew was that the previous night he and Evelegh had talked the whole matter over, and that the latter had realised how the coming of Myra had served in a large measure to wean Villiers' affections from the little Japanese girl, who, by her daintiness and childlike charm, had enmeshed the heart of the lonely European overseer of the tea-plantation. Indeed, this was sure to be so. Kusatsu herself had suspected it soon after Myra's visit, and had in her way grieved. Perhaps it was this knowledge, and the teaching and fatalism of her race, which made it seem to her the easier and in a measure the nobler part, to die to save her Villiers San.

Myra, who was sitting in a chair rather away from the rest at the end of the veranda, heard what Villiers

said with reference to the loneliness he would feel when he returned to Kin-shiu after they had set sail for England. She wondered whether his regret were really made more poignant by reason of Kusatsu San's terrible fate. She had learned something of the relationship which had existed between Kambara Kano's daughter and him, although Eileen had been guarded in what she had told her.

When Villiers had finished speaking Evelegh said very quietly :

"We are not leaving you, even though it be to go home, without regret, Hubert ; but, after all, you will soon be following us yourself, and we shall look forward to the meeting."

"Ah, that will not be for two years at least," replied Villiers, "and two years is a long time to spend in the wilderness"; adding, slowly and seriously : "I have known what it means."

Then, as though by common consent, both Evelegh and Eileen got up and went into the house—the former to write some letters, the latter to do some of the preliminary packing, for they were to leave Yokohama in less than a fortnight.

For a minute or two the silence on the veranda was unbroken, and Villiers and Myra sat separated by the vacant chairs of Evelegh and Eileen and those of the Campbells, who had gone some little way along the road back towards Nikko with some friends.

The formality of address between these two had been mutually dropped since the night spent in the close union of the overhanging shadow of death in

the Dendō Kwan; and thus, when Villiers spoke, he addressed his companion by her Christian name.

"Will you be sorry to go back, Myra?" he asked, getting up and coming towards her. "I wonder if you really will be."

He took the chair next to hers, and for a moment or two she did not reply, and then she said slowly and quietly:

"Very."

"Notwithstanding all you have gone through?" asked Villiers earnestly.

"Yes, notwithstanding all that."

For a moment or two the man paused.

Conflicting emotions possessed his mind. Memories of his lonely life on the tea-plantation before the Eveleghs came to Kin-shiu, and of the day when he had first seen the girl who now sat next to him, with her head slightly drooping and her foot rather nervously tapping the polished boards of the veranda. Then he remembered also little Kusatsu, whom he had seen for the last time smiling at him from the gateway of her father's garden, with a look of wondering curiosity and anxiety upon her face as she saw him go away along the road in company with Myra, Evelegh, and Eileen towards the tea-plantation.

What did Myra know, he now thought, of the spell of the strange, and yet not strange, attraction which this little Japanese girl had thrown around him, a lonely, exiled man of a foreign race, with whom she had come in contact? Now he almost hesitated to

say to Myra what was in his mind on this evening when they were alone in the beautiful twilight of an oncoming Japanese night, perhaps for the last time before they started for Yokohama and the girl at his side left for England.

At last, however, he said:

"I wonder why you should be sorry to go?" Placing at the same time his hand upon one of hers which was grasping the arm of the chair in which she was half sitting and half reclining.

"Oh, for many reasons," she said, turning away her face, which now remained entirely in profile against the blue-greyness of the sky seen through the opening at the end of the veranda.

Had Villiers been able to see it distinctly perhaps he would have noticed that it was suffused with a deep tinge of colour.

"For many reasons," he repeated.

"Yes."

Then there was a silence again for a moment or two.

Under the light silken *kimono* which Myra was wearing Villiers could almost see the beating of her heart, and her arm trembled as he held it. He again wondered whether Myra knew much of his intercourse with dead little Kusatsu San, and if so how much, and what she thought of the matter. Since the death of Kusatsu Villiers had felt the fascination of this clear-eyed, frank, and beautiful sister of Eileen's possessing him more and more each day, and during the short time they had been thrown so much together in Nikko, and in the intimacy of the earnest

conversations and debates which had taken place regarding the future of all the party, he had gradually come to recognise that, with the departure of Myra, there would come to him a loss which nothing could fill.

"But you are going home," he said at length; "and you will have Christopher and Eileen and Rosamund —everything that you can want; while I am left here, robbed of the pleasant companionship of my friends, the greatness of the loss of which to me you can scarcely realise."

For a moment or two the girl was silent, and then she said in a very low tone:

"It will not be nice for you, because you are so fond of Chris and Eileen, and you will miss them all the more by reason of the perils through which you have been together."

Villiers noticed that she did not include her own name or say "through which *we* have been together," and he wondered why.

Neither said anything for a moment or two and nothing was to be heard save the croaking of the frogs in the lotus-pond at the bottom of the little garden, and the Ji !-ji !-ji !-ji !-ji !-ji ! of the grasshoppers in the twilight.

"But the time will soon pass," continued Myra, with an effort at cheerfulness which she certainly did not feel.

"Two years is a long while," said Villiers meditatively. "So much may happen in two years. For example," he said, "I might lose the one thing in life which to me seems most worth having."

Myra said nothing.

She did not ask him what that one thing was, and so he went on :

"When I come back to England I might not find you, Myra Helmont."

The girl's head bent still lower, and she turned her face slightly away from him, and said very quietly :

"But perhaps you might. And why, even if you did not, should you wish to find me, Myra Helmont?"

There was again a pause, only broken by the twittering noise of the grasshoppers, the croaking of the frogs in the lotus-pond, and the subdued noise which came to them of people moving about within the house.

Then Villiers, who had removed his hand from her arm, placed it there again, and, leaning over towards her, said :

"Because if I found you so there might be some chance of my winning the one thing in the world which now seems to me worth attaining."

It was impossible for the girl to misunderstand his meaning, and she was too sensible and too honest to attempt to fence with the question which he had raised. She trembled a little, and thought how like the man himself was this way of putting things. Then, as she said nothing, Villiers continued :

"Do you think that when I come home to England, if I should find you still Myra Helmont, there would be any chance for me?"

Again there was a brief silence, and as the moon

which had climbed up into the sky, came out from behind some fleecy, silvery clouds that had half-obscured it, Villiers noticed that his companion's face was very pale.

At length the girl answered:

"I wonder what you will think of me if I am honest."

"I should probably think of you more highly, if that were possible," replied Villiers, "than I do even now."

She glanced shyly up at his face and saw there was a smile hovering at the corners of his mouth.

"Then," Myra continued, "I want you to know, before I give you any answer to your question, that I am not entirely ignorant of what had taken place between you and poor little Kusatsu San before I came to Kin-shiu. . . ."

Villiers made a motion as though he were about to interrupt her or to explain something, but, without allowing him to do this, Myra continued:

"I do not think it is for me to make myself unhappy or indeed to trouble about the past. I know that many women do, but perhaps, through the knowledge of the world that I have gained, I have learned a lesson which enables me to take a different and wider outlook upon life than many girls of my age. And so I say that I think perhaps when you come back home you may find that I am what I am now, and that something you say you desire would be possible."

Myra, as she said these words, turned her face towards him and looked into his eyes earnestly, as

though seeking to assure herself that what she understood him to mean was true.

Having gained this admission from Myra, it was natural enough that Villiers, emboldened, should not wait for two years before telling her very plainly and earnestly what the greatest thing in the world for him would be.

For a moment or two she paused before replying, and Villiers, torn by a keen anxiety concerning the answer she would give, could but admit to himself that, in asking her to share the solitude of his life upon the tea plantation, and possibly even some risks of attacks from the people of Kin-shiu, he was indeed asking a great sacrifice, was man-like, even selfish.

At last Myra spoke.

"Is it necessary," she said, "for me to tell you, Hubert, that I love you? Is it possible that you cannot have known this for some time past, and, knowing it and remembering all that we have recently been through together, can doubt what my answer would be? Much as I should like to go home with Eileen and Chris and baby Rosamund, there is but one duty for the woman who truly loves a man, and that is to be with him, at his side, to share the anxieties, and even perils, by which his life may be of necessity beset."

For a moment or two Villiers made no reply when the speaker paused.

It seemed, after nights and days of earnest thought and depression at the prospect of losing her, too good to be true that this girl, who in his eyes was not only

the most desirable among women, but one of unusual character and courage, should be willing to exile herself with him, perhaps for several years, and should choose to live her life in the little bungalow on the tea-plantation at Kin-shiu, far away even from the few Europeans settled in that part of Japan, and separated from her friends and home by many thousand miles of sea and land.

"And you mean, you really mean, that you are willing to marry me almost at once, dear?" he said happily. "What will Chris say? I only wish it were practicable, my darling, for me to throw up my appointment and go home. But for two reasons it is impossible: first of all because I should be a coward to do it; and secondly, because it would not be fair to myself or to you for me to abandon my work just when a really good position and comparative wealth seem within my grasp. But what will Chris say? And Eileen? Will she consent to leave her sister behind, and in my care?"

Myra was about to reply just as Evelegh, who had finished his letters, came out on to the balcony.

Evelegh caught their words and was not slow to understand their meaning.

"Well, you two," he said, coming forward and smiling, "what have you been doing while I have been trying to concentrate my mind on letter-writing?"

Then he added, after a pause and a glance at Myra, who, now the *shoji* were pushed back, was sitting in a stream of yellow lamplight coming from out the room:

"But I think I can somehow guess. I am very

glad that it should be so. I can congratulate you both, because I know both of you so well."

And then he called:

"Eileen, come here a moment"; and when she came there were other and warmer congratulations; and Myra, who had risen to embrace her sister, linked her arm through Eileen's and the two of them went into the house together to talk the matter over.

The two men walked away down the garden, and when they were out of earshot of the house Villiers said to his friend:

"I don't quite know how it happened, old fellow. I had really no intention of speaking to Myra before she sailed, although I might have written a little later on in my anxiety lest I should lose her."

"I understand," said Evelegh. "I think you were wise, for your own sake as well as for hers, to come to an understanding." And then he added, very quietly, and with a touch of sadness in his voice, "I know what you feel about the poor little soul who has gone. I am a man, too, and it is not difficult for me to understand how you drifted, and how you came at length to believe that you really desired her above everything, strange though such a thing should be. But it was a merciful thing, at least for you, that Providence intervened, and that that episode in your life should have come to an end when it did.

"As for Myra," he continued after a pause, "she is a type of girl who, I think, could never understand that there was anything really serious between you and little Kusatsu San. Not only would she regard it as impossible from a racial point of view, but, like

all other women, she would not be able to understand that a brown skin could ever enter into serious competition with a white. She is a sensible girl, too, and, having made up her mind, as she evidently has, that she loves you (and of that I have no doubt) the other thing will be banished—or has banished itself, whichever you like—into the limbo which waits forgotten things. You are both of you lucky. You have been literally through the fire together, and I have no doubt that you have a bright future."

"I suppose," said Evelegh, when Villiers had taken his hand and thanked him for his consent, "I suppose that you would like to be married before we leave Nikko, and then you could come to Yokohama with us and see us sail. I hope that things will settle down at Kin-shiu before you need go back, and that you will take care of yourself, and," he added gravely, "of Myra. Be watchful lest any of those who have hated me and the Gospel I preach may, in mistaken enmity, seek to do you two harm."

"I will look after her and myself, never you fear," said Villiers. "And, somehow or other, I fancy there will be no more trouble in Kin-shiu. I think the drastic measures of our friend, Lieutenant Kio-sai, and the frightened Sonchō will have taught the people a lesson. You need not leave Nikko," Villiers continued, "for ten days. Could we not be married this day week, if Myra consents?"

"Yes, certainly," said Evelegh, with a smile. "So far as I am concerned, it can be arranged, and I think you will not find Eileen or Myra put difficulties in the way. It would be a great pleasure for me to

marry you, which of course I should not be able to do if the event is to be postponed."

. . . . .

The few days which elapsed between the arrival of the Eveleghs, Myra, and Villiers in Yokohama and the sailing of the former and little Mishima for England was spent with friends at their villa on the tree-clad bluff overlooking the waters of the harbour. Villiers had many friends in Yokohama residing in the foreign settlement, all of whom congratulated him warmly on his marriage.

It seemed strange, indeed, for the Eveleghs and Villiers once more to find themselves in the almost English-looking main street of the foreign settlement, with its Bible House and other shops with English signs and English proprietors.

The news of the affair at Kin-shiu had, of course, long ago reached Yokohama, and the indignation of the foreign residents was great at the attack which had been made upon Evelegh and the Mission House.

Evelegh himself spent many hours in consultation with the authorities, only to find that their opinion coincided with that of Lieutenant Kio-sai, namely, that it would be impossible for him, for the present at least, to take up his work again in Kin-shiu.

One bright afternoon, four days after their arrival in Yokohama, Myra and Villiers stood on the Bund, watching the great mail-boat steaming away down the Sound, heading towards the wider waters of Sagami Ura, the South, and home, carrying with it Evelegh, Eileen, Rosamund, and little Mishima, all of whom

stood on the promenade deck near the stern waving fluttering handkerchiefs in farewell. And only when, at last, the steamer became nothing more than a speck upon the horizon did Myra, slipping her arm clingingly through that of Villiers, turn away and make her way along the Bund to her new home.

THE END

Printed by Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury.

PATERNOSTER HOUSE
PATERNOSTER ROW
LONDON, E.C., *August*, 1911

Messrs. HURST & BLACKETT'S

BOOKS for the AUTUMN 1911.

A NEW AND THOROUGHLY REVISED EDITION OF

CAPTAIN E. D. MILLER'S

STANDARD WORK

Modern Polo

In demy 8vo, cloth gilt, **16s.** *net.*

With about 150 illustrations and diagrams, of which over 50 are entirely new to the work.

In preparing this third Edition of his work the Author has found it desirable to omit some of the matter appearing in the old Edition and to substitute for it later and more useful information. He has thoroughly overhauled his book and improved it in many ways by a close revision and by much new matter, the result of his further experience during the years the second Edition of his work has been running. Some important new appendices have been added, containing a great deal of new and interesting material in the shape of lists, rules, &c.; and the book generally brought up to date; a great many new illustrations in the shape of photographs, diagrams, etc., have also been included and some of the old ones discarded, and it is believed that the work has now been made as informative and complete as possible. As the second Edition was first published several years ago and has been out of print for some time, there have been many demands for this new Edition, and the Publishers feel sure that it will be welcomed.

BOOKS BY DOUGLAS SLADEN.

A POPULAR EDITION

OF

The Secrets of the Vatican,

The Palace of the Popes

In one handsome demy 8vo vol. Cloth, richly gilt, gilt top, 400 pp. Sixty illustrations and plans, including reproductions of the most interesting engravings from Pistolesi's great work on the Vatican. **7/6** *nett.*

"A book for every traveller."—*Westminster Gazette.* "It is a book which every Catholic should possess."—*Catholic Times.* "The most complete guide to the Vatican in English."—*Illustrated London News.* "No better account of the working of the most interesting government in Europe has ever been written in English—likely to remain of permanent and possibly indispensable use."—*Daily Telegraph.* "We welcome his book as a timely corrective to much current prejudice."—*Tablet.*

A Second Edition of

Queer Things about Egypt

By the Author of "Egypt and the English," "Queer Things about Japan," "Queer Things about Persia," etc.

In one large vol., square demy 8vo, cloth gilt, **21s.** *net.*

With 65 beautiful illustrations, from photographs, printed on art paper.

"This book about Egypt abounds in entertaining out-of-the-way things. It covers every conceivable point of view of Egypt."—*Outlook.*

"Brightly written, Mr. Sladen knows his Egypt well."—*Evening Standard.*

A Companion Volume to "Queer Things about Egypt"

Oriental Cairo :

The City of the Arabian Nights

Author of "Queer Things about Egypt," "Egypt and the English," "The Tragedy of the Pyramids," "Queer Things about Japan," "The Japs at Home," etc., etc.

In square demy 8vo, with map of Cairo and 64 brilliant illustrations
£1 1s. *net*

A NEW EDITION OF A STANDARD WORK.

Breaking and Riding

With Military Commentaries

By JAMES FILLIS

Ecuyer en chef to the Central Cavalry School at St. Petersburg.

Translated by M. H. HAYES, F.R.C.V.S.

Author of "Points of the Horse," "Veterinary Notes for Horse Owners," "Riding and Hunting," etc., etc.

With 70 *illustrations on art paper from photographs and sketches taken on the spot.*

In 1 *vol. demy* 8*vo cloth gilt,* **16s.** *net.*

"Those who are anxious to know something more about horsemanship than is implied in mere sticking on would be well advised to study Mr. Fillis's pages. A higher authority there could not be."—*Field.*

Mr. Fillis's book is regarded in France as the standard book on the subject, and the English translation shows that it is a thoughtful and original work."—*Morning Post.*

By ARCHIBALD HENDERSON, M.A., Ph.D.

George Bernard Shaw

His Life and Works

AN AUTHORIZED CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY

In one handsome volume $9\frac{1}{4}'' \times 6\frac{1}{4}''$, *about* 540 *p.p., cloth gilt and gilt top, with two coloured plates, two photogravure plates and* 29 *other illustrations and facsimiles,* **£1 1s.** *net.*

SECOND EDITION.

"As a whole the book is a most remarkable achievement, and is perhaps as near the facts as it is in the nature of such a work to be."—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW in the *Morning Post.*

"Its comprehensiveness gives it the importance of an historical document. . . It is something more than a chronicle of the life of Mr. Bernard Shaw, it is a remarkable chronicle of English revolutionary movements during the last twenty-five years. . . The reader who cannot find instruction and entertainment within its covers lacks the art of reading."—MR. HOLBROOK JACKSON in the *Bookman.*

"We cannot praise Mr. Henderson too highly. We know of nothing in the literature of biography that is so exhaustingly complete."—*Westminster Gazette.*

STANDARD BOOKS ON THE HORSE

By Capt. M. HORACE HAYES, F.R.C.V.S.

Riding and Hunting

By the Author of "Stable Management," "Points of the Horse," etc.

A New, Revised and Enlarged Edition. In one volume, demy 8vo, cloth, **16s.** *net, with upwards of 250 reproductions of Photographs and Drawings,*

"Among horse owners and hunting people in particular a cordial welcome will be extended to the newly issued fifth edition of 'Riding and Hunting.' It is one of a number of works written by the same author which are deserving of being regarded as standard works. It is admirably turned out, brimful of splendid hints for riders of all descriptions, whether raw or finished, and contains scores of enlightening illustrations." —*Daily Telegraph.*

Stable Management and Exercise

A BOOK FOR HORSE OWNERS AND STUDENTS

New Edition, Revised and Enlarged. Illustrated by Drawings and numerous Reproductions of Photographs taken specially for this work. In one volume, demy 8vo, cloth gilt. Price **12s.** *net.*

"The work of an exceptionally competent authority, who thoroughly understands his subject, and is able to make the results of his practical knowledge clear to readers."—*Badminton Magazine.*

Points of the Horse

A Treatise on the Conformation, Movements, Breeds and Evolution of the Horse, with 658 illustrations. Third edition, revised and enlarged, and 279 illustrations added, Super royal 8vo, cloth gilt and gilt top, **34s.**

Veterinary Notes for Horse Owners

An illustrated manual of Horse Medicine and Surgery, written in simple language with 274 illustrations. Seventh Edition revised throughout, considerably enlarged and 124 new and original photographs added. In one vol., demy 8vo, buckram, gilt, **15s.** net.

Illustrated Horsebreaking

Third Edition, Revised and Enlarged, with 130 Illustrations from Drawings by J. H. OSWALD BROWN and from Photographs specially taken for the work. One vol., demy 8vo, cloth gilt. **12/-** net.

Friedberger and Frohner's Veterinary Pathology

Translated and edited by CAPTAIN HAYES.

With notes on Bacteriology by Prof. R. TANNER HEWLETT, M.D., D.P.H. New Edition, Revised and Enlarged, and re-translated from the Sixth German Edition. 2 vols. demy 8vo, cloth gilt, **2s.** net.

A NEW AND REVISED EDITION, ENLARGED

The Horsewoman

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO SIDE-SADDLE RIDING

By MRS. HAYES

Originally edited by the late Captain M. H. HAYES. In one volume, demy 8vo, cloth gilt, **12s.** *net, with 156 illustrations.*

"The Horsewoman" is the only book in which a writer has illustrated her text in a thoroughly practical manner, by riding without a skirt in order to show, by means of instantaneous photographs, the seat and grip and length of stirrup in the various paces of the horse. Of this new edition *The Badminton Magazine* says "Mrs. Hayes's book is eminently practical. She speaks from long personal experience having passed much of her life in the saddle. Ladies who ride, or who have any intention of doing so, could not have a better adviser."

NEW 6s. NOVELS

Each in Cr. 8vo, cloth gilt.

By JUSTIN HUNTLY McCARTHY

The Fair Irish Maid

By the Author of
"Needles and Pins," "The Illustrious O'Hagan,"
"The O'Flynn," &c.

"The Fair Irish Maid" is a tale laid in the eventful days of the second decade of the nineteenth century when the name of Bonaparte was the bogey of Europe, when America and England were for the second time at odds; and when in London, at least to some of the Londoners, nothing really mattered but the deportment of the Dandies. The heroine of the story is a beautiful Irish girl, the impoverished descendant of an ancient Irish house, who is suddenly lifted, by the will of an Irish-American relative from the depths of poverty to the height of wealth. She comes to London where she reigns the queen of a splendid season that is only faintly troubled by the drums of war, and for some glittering months she is the unquestioned ruler of the modish world.

By EFFIE ADELAIDE ROWLANDS

Hester Trefusis

By the Author of "The Fault of One," &c.

Messrs. Hurst and Blackett Ltd. have pleasure in announcing a new and entirely original novel by this popular writer.

NEW 6/- NOVELS

Body versus Soul

By G. de VAURIARD

The theme of this story is that of the triumph of the soul over even the physical inheritances of the body. The heroine, Alison, is the wife of a coarse, sensual brute whose violent treatment of his refined and beautiful wife results in driving her into the society of an Italian marquis, with whom she forms a purely platonic friendship of a few days when they part. Alison leaves her husband, who is unfaithful, for a place of hiding, where she has a son. Although it is impossible for the child to be other than that of her husband, it bears a resemblance to the Marquis, and trouble arises. It is to this likeness that the author devotes a good deal of thoughtful suggestion.

A NEW NOVEL BY A NEW WRITER

The Verge of Twilight

By E. O. CAROLIN

Messrs. Hurst & Blackett have been very successful in bringing Africa into popularity as a background for fiction. During the last two or three years they have published the following exceedingly popular works—Cynthia Stockley's "The Claw," "Poppy," &c., Gertrude Page's "Edge o' Beyond," "The Silent Rancher," &c., and they now introduce another powerful realistic story which is very true to life as the writer has lived in the country for years, and is thoroughly familiar with the scenes and life described. There are two striking women characters continually in the foreground.

New 6/- Novels.

By CLIVE HOLLAND

Brown Face and White

By the Author of "My Japanese Wife," &c.

Mr. Clive Holland places the scene of this novel in Japan, which has provided him with the setting for his most successful romances "My Japanese Wife," "Musume," and "A Japanese Romance," and he has given a vivid picture of the life of a missionary and his family in the early days of missions in Japan. The main thread of the story, however, concerns an Englishman, the manager of a tea plantation; the delightful daughter of a Japanese florist; and the sister-in-law of the missionary, a charming English girl, whose coming to Kin-shiu on a visit to her sister results in the tea planter falling in love with her. How his entanglement with the little Japanese girl is solved forms one of the most stirring episodes in the book, which has a dramatic and unexpected ending

By E. GALLIENNE ROBIN

Jacquine of The Hut

By a New Writer

Messrs. HURST AND BLACKETT have pleasure in introducing a new and promising writer who has chosen Sark as a background, which is almost an entirely new one to the novelist. The book introduces some quaint and interesting customs—dating back to smuggling days—and the uncommon love story of Jacquine. She is the daughter of a hypocritical smuggler, a wild creature who, by some, is looked upon as a witch. She loves with devotion, a wild sea-loving man, handsome, reckless and dare-devil, but he does not at first return her passion. But they are made for one another and she is far too strong a nature to accept the situation calmly. After much tribulation and tragedy they come together.

New 6/- Novels

By CHARLES MARRIOTT

The Dewpond

By the Author of "The Column," "Now," etc

This is a story of the "Young England," which has succeeded to the revolting youth of the eighties. These young people have got used to liberty, particularly to the increased freedom of association between the sexes. Finding that the old rules of conduct are no help to them in the new conditions, and that their parents and guardians have nothing better to offer them than the old rules, they are unconsciously formulating standards of their own—which are, if anything, higher and more exacting than those of their elders. In any emergency parents and guardians are found to be critics rather than guides. This new "Young England" is the Dewpond. There are traces of it everywhere but in the story its geographical site is a certain street in the West-end of London, somewhere between the Plutocracy of Park Lane and the Backwoods of Berkeley Square. The characteristics of the Dewpond, as suggested by its geographical situation, are the innocence of the dove and the wisdom of the serpent.

By ALICE AND CLAUDE ASKEW

Destiny

2nd Edition.

By the Authors of "The Shulamite," "The Woman Deborah," etc.

This strong psychological novel is built round the character of quite a young girl, who is the central figure in the book. She is a healthy pagan, and all she desires out of life is happiness; but from the first she is cursed and haunted by bad luck, and is the helpless victim of the sin and folly of her parents. She struggles wildly for her happiness, but she is only a fluttering butterfly and the strong winds of fate blow her hither and thither as they will, and when she marries the wrong man—a thorough good fellow, but in some ways a prig—the end is in sight. Some women are born to be happy, others to be wretched—doomed from their cradle to be the hapless victims of unkind destiny, and Delia Cresswell belongs to the latter category, but she is a brave little soul, and she smiles up to the end.

Some Successful 6/- Novels

RECENTLY PUBLISHED

By CYNTHIA STOCKLEY

The Claw

5th Edition

By the Author of "Poppy" and "Virginia of the Rhodesians."

"Miss Stockley relates with power and sincerity a story of love, jealousy, slander, war and crime. Warm praise is due to the vividness with which the social life of a restricted and anxious community is presented. And the heroine's biting wit, her candour in love, and her sympathy with black sheep make her a remarkable figure. The novel is a notable work."—*Athenæum.*

"Miss Stockley's writing and characterisations are exceedingly clever, and she shows, as in her former books, an intimate knowledge of Rhodesia. Deirdre is delightful, not in the least conventional or namby-pamby, but real grit all through. The book should find a wide and appreciative public, for it contains, besides a good story skilfully told, a considerable amount of pungent humour and shrewd philosophy."—*World.*

Winding Paths

3rd Edition

By the Author of "The Edge o' Beyond," "Love in the Wilderness," "The Silent Rancher," etc.

"This is most certainly the best book that Miss Page has yet written. The note of the book is its astonishing truth. It is from the first page to the last of quite absorbing interest. The women are real and vivid in all that they say and do."—*Standard.*

By JUSTIN HUNTLY McCARTHY

The King over the Water

By the Author of

"Needles and Pins," "The Illustrious O'Hagan,"
"The O'Flynn," &c.

"Mr. McCarthy is a fresh and independent stylist, whom it is always pleasant to read and consider. He now displays his customary vigour and attractiveness in romantically setting the prelude to the nuptials of the Chevalier St. George and the Princess Clementina Sobieska. The theme implies ingenious plotting and perilous enterprise. Mr. McCarthy dexterously handles his material, exhibiting fertility of contrivance, skilful management of narrative and dialogue, quiet but effective play of humour and a regulating sense of proportion. The work makes an appreciable addition to the series of his engaging romances."—*Glasgow Herald.*

Volumes at One Shilling Net

Each in small crown 8vo, cloth gilt, wrapper in colours.

By JEROME K. JEROME

The Second Thoughts of an Idle Fellow

By JUSTIN HUNTLY McCARTHY

The O'Flynn

By DOUGLAS SLADEN

The Tragedy of the Pyramids

By MORLEY ROBERTS

The Prey of the Strongest

By JEROME K. JEROME

The Passing of The Third Floor Back

and other Stories.

ALSO

A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE EDITION IN BOOKLET FORM

FOR PRESENTATION

of the same Author's Original Story of

The Passing of the Third Floor Back

Printed on antique paper in two colours, with thick white paper cover, gilt edges, size $4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5\frac{3}{4}''$. *Price* **1s.** *net*

JEROME K. JEROME'S

GREAT PLAY

The Passing of the Third Floor Back

In crown 8vo, well printed on antique paper, with 16 *illustrations on art paper, cloth gilt,* **2s. 6d.** *net. In paper cover,* **1s. 6d.** *net.*

The stage version of Mr. Jerome's beautiful story with the same title.

VOLUMES AT ONE SHILLING NET

Each in small crown 8vo, in pictorial paper covers in colours.

13th Edition now ready of

CYNTHIA STOCKLEY'S

REMARKABLE NOVEL

Poppy

The story of a South African Girl

"Typical of those novels that treat of the clash of temperament and passion, Miss Cynthia Stockley is a writer of unusual ability. The story grips the attention from start to finish, and grows in interest to the very moment of its startling *dénouement*. Poppy herself, with her vivid personality, her love and hates, her strong courage, is finely conceived and finely drawn. Miss Stockley has written a remarkable novel."
—*Observer*.

By DOLF WYLLARDE

Mafoota

By WILLIAM LE QUEUX

Spies of the Kaiser

NEW TWO SHILLING NET VOLUME

By RICHARD WHITEING

All Moonshine

In cr. 8vo, cloth gilt.

"This extraordinarily fine work."—*World*.
"A volume bursting with ideas."—*Daily Graphic*.

Hurst and Blackett's

. . Popular . .

Sevenpenny Novel Series

Volumes already issued

A QUESTION OF QUALITY	By Madame Albanesi
THE WHITE HOUSE	By M. E. Braddon
JANET	By Mrs. Oliphant
THE HOUSE OF INTRIGUE ...	By Percy White
THE SEVENTH DREAM	By "Rita"
BEQUEATHED	By Beatrice Whitby
A SOUL APART	By Adeline Sergeant
NEEDLES AND PINS	By Justin Huntly McCarthy
DRUSILLA'S POINT OF VIEW ...	By Madame Albanesi
THE CUCKOO IN THE NEST ...	By Mrs. Oliphant
A MARCH IN THE RANKS	By Jessie Fothergill
COLONEL DAVERON	By Percy White
THE ILLUSTRIOUS O'HAGAN ...	By Justin Huntly McCarthy
THE STRONGEST OF ALL THINGS	By Madame Albanesi
THE YOUNGEST MISS MOWBRAY...	By Mrs. B. M. Croker
THE IDES OF MARCH	By Mrs. Baillie Reynolds
A YOUNG MAN FROM THE COUNTRY	By Madame Albanesi
THE TURNSTILE OF NIGHT ...	By Mrs. C. N. Williamson
HER OWN PEOPLE	By Mrs. B. M. Croker

THE BEST VALUE EVER OFFERED

NEW VOLUMES

OF

HURST AND BLACKETT'S

Popular 7d. Novel Series

Each in small cr. 8vo, cloth gilt, well printed from new type on good paper with frontispiece illustration and decorative title page on art paper and wrapper in two colours, 7d. net.

Moonlight

By MARY E. MANN
Author of "The Cedar Star."

Marian Sax

By MADAME ALBANESI
Author of "A Question of Quality," etc.

The Infinite Capacity

By COSMO HAMILTON
Author of "Adam's Clay," etc.

It was a Lover and His Lass

By MRS. OLIPHANT
Author of "Janet," etc.

The God of Love

By JUSTIN HUNTLY McCARTHY
Author of "Needles and Pins," etc.

Kitty Holden

By ADELINE SERGEANT
Author of "A Soul Apart," etc.

The Novels of GERTRUDE PAGE

The following novels are of Rhodesian Life. Each in crown 8vo, cloth gilt, **6s.**

The Silent Rancher

"'The Silent Rancher' is one of the best novels we have read this season."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

Love in the Wilderness

"This is the wild land of Rhodesia, with its space, freshness, freedom and kopjes, the breath of life to one girl and the poison of another. A bright story with a glow of real life in it."—*Daily Chronicle.*

The Edge O'Beyond

"In this story of Rhodesian life the author has shown impartially both the sunshine and the shadows of that land of charm and mystery."—*Punch.*

Lord Wolverton, commencing an article on Rhodesia in the *Daily Telegraph*, said, "'The Edge O'Beyond,' the title of a novel from the powerful pen of Gertrude Page."

Paddy, the Next Best Thing

"All novel readers will love Paddy, who was a wild girl, 'the next best thing' to being a boy."—*Morning Post.*

Two Lovers and a Lighthouse

In crown 8vo, cloth gilt and gilt top, **3s. 6d.**

"A charming love story on a somewhat original background. It covers a great deal of ground, and contains much clever and tender writing with touches of humour to relieve the pathos."—*Scotsman.*

also

In crown 8vo, cloth gilt, with the Author's portrait, **2s. 6d.** *net.*

Jill's Rhodesian Philosophy

or The Dam Farm

"A delightful book, written with much charm and distinction."—*Literary World.*

"A capital description of life on a farm in Rhodesia. There is a glow of real life in the telling which fascinates the reader, and holds the attention from first to last."—*The Queen.*

HURST AND BLACKETT'S

6d. COPYRIGHT NOVELS

Well Printed from New Type on Good Paper and bound in paper cover in colours

New Volumes for 1911

By EDNA LYALL

63 A HARDY NORSEMAN
64 A KNIGHT ERRANT
65 IN SPITE OF ALL
66 TO RIGHT THE WRONG

By EFFIE ADELAIDE ROWLANDS

67 THE FAULT OF ONE
68 HUSBAND AND FOE
69 LOVE'S FIRE

By ADELINE SERGEANT

70 MARJORY'S MISTAKE

By FLORENCE WARDEN

71 A SOCIETY SCARE

Already issued

ALBANESI (Madame)
15 Marian Sax

ALEXANDER (Mrs.)
36 A Crooked Path

ASKEW (Alice & Claude
42 The Orchard Close

BARR (Robert)
28 A Rock in the Baltic
35 The Triumphs of Eugene Valmont

BRADDON (M. E.)
29 Dead Love Has Chains
33 During Her Majesty's Pleasure
1 The White House
58 Her Convict

CAMBRIDGE (Ada)
38 A Happy Marriage

CLEEVE (Lucas)
51 Woman and Moses

6d. Copyright Novels already issued—CONTINUED.

CONYERS (*Dorothea*)
57 Bloom or Blight

CRAIK (*Mrs.*)
19 John Halifax, Gentleman
21 A Brave Lady
24 A Noble Life
25 A Life for a Life
26 Hannah

CROKER (*Mrs. B. M.*)
30 The Company's Servant

FARJEON (*B. L.*)
44 The Tragedy of Featherstone

GALLON (*Tom*)
37 Fortunes a-Begging
55 Jimmy Quixote

GORON (*M. F.*)
2 The World of Crime

GRAND (*Sarah*)
32 Emotional Moments

HUME (*Fergus*)
40 The Mother of Emeralds

KERNAHAN (*Coulson*)
39 The Red Peril

LE QUEUX (*William*)
4 The House of the Wicked
16 The Man from Downing Street

LYALL (*Edna*)
45 Donovan
52 In the Golden Days
48 We Two
56 Won by Waiting

MACDONALD (*Dr. Geo.*)
13 Alec Forbes of Howglen
11 David Elginbrod
12 Robert Falconer
14 Sir Gibbie

MACDONALD (*J. Middleton*)
50 Thunderbolt

MATHERS (*Helen*)
27 Pigskin and Petticoat

OXENHAM (*John*)
17 God's Prisoner

PHILLPOTTS (*Eden*)
7 Folly and Fresh Air

REYNOLDS (*Mrs. Baillie*)
59 The Tree of Knowledge

REYNOLDS (*Mrs. Fred*)
54 Love's Magic

ROBERTS (*Morley*)
46 The Flying Cloud

ROWLANDS (*Effie Adelaide*)
60 Her Heart's Longing
61 The Love that Killed
62 Her Punishment

"RITA"
31 A Man of No Importance
41 Saba Macdonald

SERGEANT (*Adeline*)
49 A Life Sentence
34 Caspar Brooke's Daughter
33 Sir Anthony
53 The Claim of Anthony Lockhart

SOMERSET (*Lady Henry*)
5 Under the Arch of Life

"THE DEVIL'S PEEPSHOW" (*By the Author of*)
3 A Time of Terror

"THE VIEWS OF CHRISTOPHER (*By the Author of*)
6 The Showman

"A YELLOW ASTER" (*By the Author of*)
23 He for God only

TYNAN (*Katherine*)
18 A King's Woman

WATTS-DUNTON (*Theodore*)
20 Aylwin

WHITBY (*Beatrice*)
47 Bequeathed
9 The Awakening of Mary Fenwick
10 Mary Fenwick's Daughter

WILLIAMSON (*Mrs. C. N.*)
22 The Silent Battle

YORKE (*Curtis*)
8 Bungay of Bandiloo

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY,
BERKELEY

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE
STAMPED BELOW

Books not returned on time are subject to a fine of 50c per volume after the third day overdue, increasing to $1.00 per volume after the sixth day. Books not in demand may be renewed if application is made before expiration of loan period.

SENT ON ILL

JAN 0 6 2002

U. C. BERKELEY

AUG 15 1932

22 Mar'58RP

REC'D LD

MAR 11 19

20m-11,'20

411610

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY